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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . . Page 713
NOT WITHOUT TEARS 716
THE CARLSBAD PROGRAMME 717
A LONDON DIARY 718
THE SHOPS MUDDLE 719
THIS ENGLAND 721
CATALONIA FIGHTS ON 721
TOO EASY. By Y. Y. 722
GENES 723
CORRESPONDENCE 724
By X. Y. Z.; Hugh Ross Williamson; "Rank and File"; Roy Walker; George R. White; G. L. Schwartz.
DEAD BODIES. By Harry Roberts 726
COUNTRY NOTES. By V. Sackville West . . . 728
THE MOVIES. By Peter Galway 728
PLAYS AND PICTURES . . . . . Page 729
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By David Garnett . . . 730
REVIEWS:
The Power Behind the Throne. By Raymond Mortimer 732
The Spanish Tragedy. By V. S. Pritchett . 734
Christians. By Kingsley Martin 736
The East Wind Blows on the Physicists. By C. E. M. Joad 738
Humanity Dehumanised. By Harry Roberts . 740
Sarum Close. By Desmond Hawkins . . . 742
SHORTER NOTICES 744
ABOUT MOTORING. By R. E. Davidson . . . 744
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS 746
CROSSWORD 749
THE WEEK IN THE CITY. By Dives . . . 750

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

WE have so many bones to pick with His Majesty's present Government in the United Kingdom that we are all the more glad to find an occasion on which we can praise it without reserve. The Anglo-Irish Agreement is an excellent piece of work, and will give satisfaction to all but a few British Blimps and their counterparts in Eire. The negotiators on both sides behaved with amiability and a sense of realities throughout, and by common consent Mr. Malcolm MacDonald in particular added greatly to his reputation. The Agreement ends, for good and all we hope, the foolish and discreditable quarrel which has lasted for six years, and in which neither side was free from blame. Mr. De Valera, no doubt, was bound to remember Ulster, and to refer to "partition as the only remaining obstacle to final reconciliation between the peoples of the two countries." But that, as he knows, is not a live issue to-day, or one that will keep either him or us awake o' nights.

The Anglo-Irish Agreements

The main heads of the Agreement are three. Control of the military harbours of Cobh, Berehaven and Lough Swilly is transferred to the Government of Eire, and there is no reason to suppose that they will not take their task seriously. It is fantastic to imagine that Mr. De Valera or any other responsible statesman in Eire would offer these stations to Hitler or anyone else as a base of operations against England. Secondly, an Irish payment of £10,000,000 will settle all outstanding financial claims—except that in respect of damage to property under the 1925 Agreement the Government of Eire will continue to pay £250,000 a year. Thirdly, there is to be a comprehensive trade treaty, embodying a thorough revision of Customs duties. This, we may be sure, will be an immense relief to Irish farmers and British manufacturers. Nor has Northern Ireland come badly out of it. New arrangements have been made which ensure that, where agricultural subsidies granted in Great Britain justify corresponding subsidies in Northern Ireland, the cost will be borne by the United Kingdom. And further, the United Kingdom will not, so long as the Agreement with Eire is in force, reopen the question of its contribution towards the cost of Northern Ireland unemployment, if such contribution should exceed £1,000,000. Some British taxpayers may demur to being asked to pay anything towards Ulster's independence. But the attempt to unite the two Irelands, which might mean civil war, would be a good deal costlier for all of us.

The Budget and Tax-Evasion

The Chancellor's proposals for netting the wealthy tax-evader are not impressive. The Finance Bill is to provide, first, that if the terms of a settlement (except in

the case of a marriage settlement) provide any power of revocation whatever, the income arising from the settled funds shall be treated for tax purposes as the settlor's income. This will defeat the evaders who settle their capital on members of their family, so as to avoid surtax, but retain ultimate control of it by making revocation dependent only on the vote of a " tame " trustee. Secondly, it will no longer be possible to dodge income tax by settling securities on trustees who then proceed to " lend " the settlor the accruing income. Such " loans " will in future be taxable income. Finally, avoidance of tax by transferring assets to a dummy foreign company is to be made more difficult. In brief, some loop-holes are to be belatedly closed, but the process of camouflaging income as capital receipts—e.g. by the sale of imaginary property to a network of dummy companies abroad—will still, we fear, be possible. The estimate of a bare million thus gained in income tax and surtax receipts suggests that Sir John doubts the efficacy of his own proposals. The one radical cure would have been to throw on suspects the onus of proving that their juggling with securities is not intended as a means of tax-evasion—a course distasteful to a Government whose friends are rich.

Food Storage

Sir John Simon, in announcing that steps had already been taken during the past few months towards building up emergency stores of certain foodstuffs, as well as of materials essential to rearmament, made a great point of the secrecy with which the Government's plans had been developed in order to prevent an artificial rise in prices. Secrecy may, indeed, have helped to conceal the amount of the Government's purchases; but it has been evident for some time past, at all events in the wheat market, that an unknown buyer—which could only be the Government—has been at work; and the secrecy may just as easily have raised prices as lowered them. The essential thing in building up stocks of food is not to keep the purchases secret—which can hardly be done—but to make them gradually and to accommodate them to the state of the market from day to day. Sir John Simon announced legislation to authorise, retrospectively, the buying already done, and to provide for further purchases; and it is to be hoped that for the future the Government will rely not on secrecy but on using its power to enter or not enter the markets as a means of steadying prices. The advocates of food storage have often been misunderstood as favouring immediate Government buying on a large scale; but what they have in fact urged has been gradual building up of stocks as opportunities arise of acquiring them at a cheap rate. This can best be secured by setting up a regular buying agency; and we hope the proposed Bill will provide for this, and will also ensure full publicity for its operations, so that we shall at any rate know promptly what it has done, though not what it is intending to do at any particular time.

Aircraft from the U.S.A.

The despatch of an Air Ministry technical mission to investigate possibilities of military aircraft production in Canada and, more immediately, the purchase of machines for the R.A.F. from United States manufacturers has brought to a head the growing volume of criticism of Air Ministry methods. Even in the " solid " section of the Government press charges are now made that there is a " crisis "; that the Ministry's planning and supply departments have made a mess of the whole rearmament programme; that, as a result, some manufacturing firms are starved of orders, others held up by " bottle-necks " in the flow of components; and that, in the absence of nationally co-ordinated mass-production, costs are unduly high and output far behind schedule. The available evidence supports the critics and justifies those who have always held that private enterprise in armaments is inefficient as well as politically undesirable. That deficiencies of organisation can be made good by imports of American bombers is not to be believed. For war purposes ability to replace losses is ultimately more important than possession of a specified number of machines in first-line commission; and replacement depends on a country's own " war potential." In order to catch up with programme arrears, purchases from the United States are a spectacular but not a true remedy. Indeed, in view of the American Neutrality Act they are only a stop-gap *pis aller*. The British Government's efforts would be better directed to strengthening economic and trade relations generally with the United States.

The Far East

Heavy fighting has continued in Southern Shantung, where a large Japanese force is threatening Taierchwang, and another is pressing, in the face of stubborn resistance, towards Suchow. Both sides make claims from day to day of victories, but there is no news of real importance—wholesale killing and wounding, destruction of towns and villages and the devastation of the land, are, of course, quite unimportant. Rumours are afloat, in view of what some regard as a stalemate in Shantung, that peace feelers may be put out by one side or the other; but the evidence on which these are based seems of the slightest. Meanwhile foreign interests have been occupied in protecting themselves against Japanese encroachments. The United States has protested against the proposed formation of an oil monopoly in North China, which it was believed would deal a heavy blow at the business of foreign companies. This, however, the Foreign Office spokesman in Tokio has declared to be a misunderstanding: the new Japanese company would deal only with the oil supplied to the Japanese military forces. More important are the negotiations which are under way for a new agreement with Japan for the regulation of the Shanghai Customs.

The Cinema Dispute

The cinema dispute seems now to have resolved itself mainly into a question of working hours. The Electrical Trades Union, most of whose members work under collective agreements providing for a 47-hour week, or at all events not more than 48 hours, refused to be parties to any bargain which is based on a longer working week. They claim that the existing conditions in the cinema industry involve a week of as much as sixty hours; and this matter seems to constitute the only serious barrier to their participation in the Conciliation Board which regulates the affairs of the industry. An attempt is now being made to get negotiations reopened under the auspices of the neutral chairman of the Conciliation Board, with a view to arranging terms for a return of the E.T.U. to the Board, and its participation in a general agreement

covering the whole trade. In the meantime the cinemas remain open; but the proprietors are more seriously embarrassed by the stoppage than they like to admit, and are certainly not in a position to carry on permanently without a settlement with the E.T.U. If the Government had ratified the Washington Hours Convention, or if Mr. Lloyd George had passed his own Eight Hours Bill into law in 1919—when the employers' organisations as well as the Trade Unions had assented to it—disputes of this sort would never have arisen. It is not the impoverished industries which work an unduly long week in order to recoup their losses; the scandal of excessive hours exists most of all in prosperous and rapidly growing occupations, such as cinemas and garages, which can best of all afford to give their employees reasonable leisure.

The Government and the Engineers

The Amalgamated Engineering Union still shows no sign of a readiness to be stampeded into giving the employers a blank cheque to introduce dilution of labour. They know very well that their skilled services are indispensable, and that most of the talk about the need for dilution under present conditions is "all my eye." They are, moreover, more critical of the Government's policy, as the will to tolerate continued Fascist intervention in Spain up to the point of a complete Franco victory becomes obvious beyond all question. The Government itself, in face of the A.E.U.'s attitude, is rather at a loss. For the A.E.U. has not refused to co-operate; it has merely asked the Government to begin by stating in precise terms what it wants and why. This, however, the Government is not at all prepared to do. It does not want anything in particular—merely, in general, that the Trade Unions should stay quite quiet and allow the employers a free hand. It is certainly not prepared with any concrete plans for speeding up production, or for anything else; and, above all, it is not ready to make any statement, beyond rank platitude, about the purposes which the armaments it calls for are intended to serve. Consequently there is a deadlock. The Government wants the A.E.U. to go and talk to the employers without asking it any further questions: the A.E.U. retorts that it will consider the matter when it is told what the Government wants.

The Cocoa Truce

The Gold Coast native producers of cocoa have won a victory, albeit—at least temporarily—of a Pyrrhic nature. The international combine of cocoa-buyers has agreed to suspend, until the marketing of next season's crop in October, the operations of its single purchasing-pool, whose effect, the growers claimed, had been to force down prices against them. The combine's centralised pool for selling manufactured goods on the Coast is to remain in being, but the 1937–38 cocoa crop will be marketed on the old lines, through middlemen acting for the various buying firms. The growers' strike, which has held up exports since last autumn, is called off. Unhappily for the native producers, consumption—particularly in the United States, which normally absorbs half the world output—has lately shrunk, and the end of the Gold Coast hold-up has been followed by a fresh fall in cocoa prices which will disappoint the growers. Before next October, however, the Commission of Inquiry into Gold Coast cocoa production will presumably have reported, and will, we trust, include in its report proposals for the orderly marketing of cocoa. Future development should clearly lie along lines of Government assistance in the formation of growers' co-operative societies. Only by some such means is it possible to check the highly undesirable attempt of an international cocoa-buyers' ring to establish monopolistic control of the price — both of what the native grower has to sell and of what he needs to buy in exchange.

Which Aliens?

It would be absurd to pretend that there is no justification for the campaign in the Beaverbrook press for keeping a sharp eye on German residents in this country. The justification is created by Nazi policy which insists that every German must be a propagandist for the Nazi philosophy wherever he is, and after the experience of the Cagoulards in France (whose foreign connections were kept discreetly quiet in this country) and the revelations in the documents found in German headquarters when the rebellion began in Spain, it becomes clear that every democratic regime must be on its guard against the "Fifth Column." It is impossible for Germans to come freely to this country unless their opinions are regarded as correct by Dr. Goebbels. But a campaign against "aliens" is full of danger: it may be used to make life more difficult for refugees who have no other home to go to and who may have much that is valuable to add to our national life; it may lead to injustice and misrepresentation. How easily and dangerously confusion may arise we may see from a leading article that appeared in the *Evening Standard* of April 20th, where the career of a thoroughly "undesirable alien," Mario Santini, was made the subject of a very inappropriate sermon. Santini has been convicted not only of serious motoring offences, but also of keeping a brothel and breaking the licensing laws. The moral drawn by the *Evening Standard* was that we should be very careful about our hospitality to political refugees. But we have heard nothing to suggest that Santini was a political refugee; on the contrary, his café has the reputation of being a haunt of Fascists in London and there is every reason to think that Santini's opinions would be quite to Mussolini's liking.

Next week's Literary Supplement to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will include a story by William Saroyan and a poem by C. Day Lewis. There will be articles and reviews by: Sir Norman Angell on M. J. Bonn's *The Crumbling of Empire*; Sir William Beveridge on Lancelot Hogben's *Political Arithmetic*; Elizabeth Bowen on Stephen Gwynn's *Dublin, Old and New*; R. H. S. Crossman on Borgese's *Goliath: the March of Fascism*; Leonard Woolf on Stuart Chase's *The Tyranny of Words*; Rose Macaulay on the King's English. Other reviewers will be L. B. Namier, Arthur Machen, Peter Quennell, Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Stephen Spender, Kenneth Bell, C. E. M. Joad, Hugh Dalton, M.P., Christopher St. John, K. John, V. S. Pritchett, and Edward Sackville West.

NOT WITHOUT TEARS

THERE is, or used to be, a method popular among small boys for deciding the nice question of tribal leadership: the elected leader is he who can stand pain with most fortitude. In framing this year's budget, Sir John Simon would seem to have bethought him of boyhood's Red Indian make-believe. The European gang must be shown that Britain stands up best to the fiscal endurance test; Hitler must be made to realise that, whatever tears may be shed in private, the people of this country, hot for leadership in the armaments race, can endure with public fortitude taxation which really hurts. Only on this assumption is it possible to explain a budget which is frigid in its severity, risks damage to the sources of the main tax receipts, and takes no pains to lay the increased burden on shoulders best able to bear it.

Arithmetically the sum is straightforward. Excluding contingent supplementaries for armaments—the cost of whose post-Austria "acceleration" is left undisclosed—the Chancellor put his 1938-39 outgoings at £1,034 millions, out of which £90 millions would be met by loans already authorised. The balance of £944 millions to be carried in the budget was larger than was expected—for two reasons. The appropriation for debt interest was raised from £224 millions to £230 millions—a figure which should provide a margin of at least £12 millions for debt redemption—and a civil supplementary of £10 millions was added to cover the cost of storing wheat, sugar and whale oil purchased as a reserve against war emergency. Why the acquisition of such assets should not be financed by loan Sir John did not explain.

In estimating prospective revenue the Chancellor took a view which assumes that there will be no recovery from the present business recession. A full year of 5s. income tax based on the higher industrial profits of 1937 would yield an additional £21 millions, and there would be a £5 millions gain in sur-tax, whose fluctuations have a year's time-lag. But probable receipts from N.D.C. must be scaled down, and continued stock market inactivity and depreciation of securities would have serious effects on the yield from Stamps and Estate duties. Total revenue from existing taxes he placed at £914 millions. The Finance Act is to endeavour to close further loop-holes against wealthy tax-evaders; but the Chancellor insisted that little more than a million could be expected from this direction in the current year. Nor would he have anything to do with "cupboard-raiding." The profits in the Debt Commissioners' Victory Bond account and those which would accrue from revaluing the gold in the Exchange account are left undisturbed, and the £10 millions due this year from Eire are excluded from revenue. The gap of £30 millions is bridged by an increase of sixpence in the standard rate of income tax, and by adding twopence a pound and a penny a gallon, respectively, to the duties on tea and petrol.

Having decided in favour of increased taxation as opposed to larger loan expenditure, the Chancellor merits no congratulations on his choice of the taxes to be screwed up. It was open to him to raise £9 millions by a 10 per cent. increase in the Estate duties, and a similar sum by lowering the sur-tax limit to, say, £1,750 and steepening the sur-tax scale by an extra shilling in the pound on huge incomes. In both cases, an increase in the burden would have been just, would not have impaired consumers' demand and would have gone some little way to lessen the present gross disparities in the distribution of wealth. As it is, the added sixpence in the standard rate of income tax—alleviated for incomes below the £300-500 level—will fall with severity on the middle-class, whose £750-1,500 incomes are not susceptible of painless contraction and whose participation in armaments profits is negligible. The armament firms are actually singled out for preferential treatment in that the sixpence increase in their case is offset by ample allowances for depreciation of plant.

As for the indirect taxes selected for increase, the only thing to be said in favour of the higher petrol duty is that it is easy to collect. At 9*d.* a gallon the duty is now nearly treble the wholesale price of the commodity, and is vicious in that it enters into the operating costs of public transport. Coupled with a 5*s.* 6*d.* income tax, a 9*d.* petrol duty should deepen gravely the existing depression in the motor industry. As for tea, Sir John—again going, apparently, for ease in collection—has chosen an article which cannot be called by any stretch of the imagination a marginal luxury even for the poorest consumer. It was a piece of cynical hypocrisy for the Chancellor to suggest in his speech that families under the poverty line would welcome this opportunity of contributing to the cost of aeroplanes and battleships. For the unemployed, the old-age pensioner and the millions of low-paid workers the burden of indirect taxation on essentials is already onerous. The budget leaves the interests of the Government's wealthy brewing and distilling backers unimpaired. Rather than exact 8*d.* per pound from the tea-drinker, the Chancellor might well have increased slightly the existing duties on spirits, wine, beer, tobacco and entertainments—none of which are essential to life. Better still, with the exercise of ingenuity, he could readily have found other marginal commodities—such as cosmetics, patent medicines, even bicycles—whose users might fairly be asked to contribute to the Exchequer. There was much to be said for starting in this budget a flow from fresh revenue sources capable of expansion to meet greater needs ahead.

As it is, Sir John has imposed on the country taxation unjust in its incidence and deflationary in its absolute level. His defence—apart from the supposed desirability of "showing Hitler"—is that armaments expenditure will be still greater in 1939-40 and 1940-41; that, so far as can be judged from the continuing, slow, business decline, revenue will then be shrinking; and that it is wise to tax incomes heavily at their 1937 peak and thus keep borrowing powers so far as possible in reserve to fill an otherwise unbridgeable gap a year or two ahead. The argument has substance. It would be regrettable if Lord Beaverbrook had his way, and the country were led to believe that £350 millions a year could be spent on armaments without tears. At the same time, it is relevant to point out that last year's net addition to debt was only £25 millions, so that £45 millions (over and above the £90 millions already authorised) could have been borrowed this year without exceeding in the first two years of the rearmament programme the average rate of £80 millions a year contemplated for loan expenditure. Moreover, whatever may be said for clinging to some shreds of "sound" national finance as a guarantee that British credit will stand high on the outbreak of war, the semblance

of a balanced budget is dearly purchased if the tax increases it involves slow down the wheels of the industrial mechanism on which not merely future tax revenue but Britain's whole "war potential" depends.

To-day depression is already fairly acute, not merely in the motor industry and the trades catering for luxury and semi-durable marginal goods, but in the whole of the textile industries, tin-plate manufacture and some branches of the coal trade. In running counter to the theories of most modern economists and increasing taxation at a time when, despite the limited tonic of armament contracts, the trade cycle is unmistakably on the down-grade, the Chancellor has risked intensifying the depression and his own future revenue problems for the sake of £30 millions —less than 3 per cent. of his budget total. One result is likely to be increased pressure on the Government from direct taxpayers in their camp to economise on social services. A further result may well be increased unemployment. For the *entrepreneur*—and this consideration raises the whole question whether capitalism can arm for totalitarian war and survive in anything like its present form—has had his confidence damped badly both by the present tax increases and by the absence of any indication in the Chancellor's speech that the peak of taxation has yet been reached. Indeed, a significant feature in the presentation of the budget and in the general attitude of the Government is that enormous armament expenditure is no longer spoken of as relating to a temporary phase in which we are to make good neglected breaches in our defences. The £1,500 millions originally planned for the "programme" is to be substantially exceeded, the "programme" itself merges into an indefinite continuance of vast outlays on what is euphemistically called maintenance. The 1938–39 budget is not merely an object-lesson to Hitler; its moral for this country is that the Government has no cure for past errors of foreign policy and accepts, as the heritage of its own ineptitude, the inevitability of a future in which human effort, enjoyment and standards of life are all alike sacrificed to the blind urge of preparedness for war.

THE CARLSBAD PROGRAMME

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

IT has become increasingly clear to those who have studied the Sudeten German question that what the Henleinists—and behind them Germany—most wish to avoid is a reasonable settlement of minority grievances in Czechoslovakia. The demands made by Konrad Henlein at Carlsbad last Sunday are a practical proof of this.

It is perhaps difficult for the British public to appreciate the preposterous nature of the eight points which now constitute the Henleinist programme. Long before the Great War there were two schools of thought with regard to the Czech-German controversy in Habsburg Austria. The first consisted of those who wished to attempt a territorial demarcation between the Czechs and the Germans in Bohemia and Moravia, and to organise administration within the consequent frontiers. The second school of thought advocated a personal rather than a territorial organisation, an organisation, that is, like that of the churches. The objection to the first project was that the Czechs and the Germans were territorially so entangled that no satisfactory frontier could conceivably be drawn. The objection to the second plan was almost equally grave; it would be possible to organise education run along such lines, but practical problems like the organisation of the police or of communications of various kinds could not possibly be dealt with according to the personal principle. On these questions the proposals of Herr Jaksch, the leader of the democratic Sudeten Germans, are designed to improve the status of the German minority without disrupting the Czechoslovak State.

The Henleinists are now demanding to have the best of both worlds. According to the third of the Carlsbad demands they claim territorial demarcation, thus deliberately ignoring the tremendously mixed areas around the lignite mines and along the line which they claim as the linguistic frontier. According to their fourth and seventh points the German districts, as defined by them, are to be autonomous. At the same time by their second and fifth demands they claim personal rights; the Sudeten Germans as a whole are to be recognised as a legal personality, an organic unity, and those of them who live outside their recognised territory are to have special protection. There is no reference to any protection for Czechs living in the German autonomous area, but, on the analogy of pre-war occurrences, Czech claims would mostly be resisted as infringement of German self-government; it is at any rate clear that endless difficulties could be created.

The most startling of the eight Carlsbad demands was the last one—a demand for "full liberty for the Germans to demonstrate their adhesion to Germanism and to the ideology of the Germans." Herr Henlein followed this up with an impassioned declaration of National Socialist faith, which has the more interest since he publicly disavowed National Socialism until 1936; subsequently, while hedging in public, he invariably assured his British friends that he and his colleagues were still democrats, and not Nazis. As for the demand that the Sudeten Germans shall be free to profess National Socialism, it means that this 22 per cent. of the population of Czechoslovakia shall be entitled to renounce the basic principles of the State in which they live. It is not fantastic to say that the Henleinists are claiming a legal right to be disloyal citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic. A demand of the kind would come well from an anarchist; it is grotesque from the new converts to the totalitarianism of the German Reich. The German Nazi Party in Czechoslovakia was banned in 1933 because its aims were incompatible with the principles of the Czechoslovak constitution. Since Herr Henlein has now professed the creed of a forbidden party, the Czechoslovak Government would be fully within its rights if it immediately arrested him and his collaborators and dissolved his *Sudetendeutsche Partei* as identical with the party forbidden between four and five years ago. On the precedent of the Carlsbad demands, the German Communist party should be given unmitigated freedom of action in the Reich.

For British public opinion the most enticing of the Henleinist cries is that for the transformation of Czechoslovakia into a "second Switzerland." It is true that the Czechs were rash enough to use this phrase in the offers they made at the Peace Conference in 1919. No slogan could be more misleading. The Sudeten Germans are now asking for the distintegration of Czechoslovakia into racial groups. They are thus demanding precisely the opposite, the exact antithesis to a Swiss system. While the Henleinists are specifically rejecting the conception of the Czechoslovak citizen, the principle at the basis of the Swiss state is the idea of Swiss citizenship—*qua* Swiss. No emphasis is laid in Switzerland upon race and language, but only upon common democratic principles. Cantonal frontiers are traditional; they have nothing to do with linguistic differences, for some of the cantons are linguistically mixed. Indeed the very extensive autonomy of the cantons is made possible by the homage all pay to common political conceptions. Should the French and German Swiss embrace diametrically opposite political ideologies there is every reason to suppose that Switzerland's difficulties would be as great as those of Czechoslovakia.

What can the Czechs do in the circumstances? Their Easter amnesty was on a generous, even a foolhardy, scale. It is intelligible that they do not wish to be coerced by a

minority population nor by a foreign State into revolutionising a constitution of which they are not unjustly proud. The Henleinist programme further condemns Czechoslovakia's alliances with France and Russia. If the Prague Government does not give way, Konrad Henlein, while magnanimously announcing that he does not wish for war, implies that he might have recourse to something of the kind. To what extent this threat comes directly from Berlin it is difficult to say. It can only be supposed that it will fortify the determination of the Czechs to preserve their alliance system intact. The insistent pressure of the Reich, either directly or via Konrad Henlein, against the Paris-Prague-Moscow "axis" suggests that its potential strength exerts the most effectual restraint upon the Pan-German appetite of the regime of Adolf Hitler. Henlein's Carlsbad declaration, in fact, amounts to a demand for the annexation of the Sudeten Germans to the Reich. His sudden conversion to frank National Socialism is disagreeably reminiscent of the career of Dr. Seyss-Inquart.

There is a strong tradition in England, a tradition for which George Canning and Lord John Russell must be held largely responsible, which glorifies nationalism as the basis of the state. In an age when nationalism is degenerating through racialism into tribalism, it can scarcely continue to be associated with human progress. It is not an exaggeration to say that the fate of Czechoslovakia may yet depend upon the reactions of British public opinion, for British pressure in Prague might seriously demoralise the Czechs, while Berlin, even now, might hesitate to arouse concerted Anglo-French enmity. Is it not time that we, in this country, realised that, in combating that militarised-caveman ideology which threatens to demolish the crumbling edifice of civilisation, it is the democratic and racially composite political entities like the British Commonwealth, the United States, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia which provide a practical alternative in political organisation? The occasional follies of Czechoslovak authorities in the past become, in this context, irrelevant. For it is the composite States which preserve the conception of rational striving as opposed to hereditary passion.

A LONDON DIARY

EVERY now and then Royal Academicians get the wind up. The gulf separating them from more serious painters becomes too apparent; rumours reach the remotest rectories that the Royal Academy is not what it was; and, still more serious, outsiders—Impressionists, aren't they called?—and other such revolutionaries are selling incomparably better than R.A.s and A.R.A.s. Why, even those hitherto reliable patrons, the newly rich business-men, are getting to hear about that pushing young man, what's his name — Sickert, is it, or Augustus John? And so Mr. Sickert, Mr. John and Mr. Stanley Spencer, though they have never condescended to send their works to Burlington House, are elected A.R.A.s. The results inevitably are disappointing—it would be safer to raise Bernard Shaw to the Episcopate. The new boys try to persuade themselves that they will transform the school, but the prefects remain quite unconverted. And when a serious picture is submitted to the Hanging Committee, their sincere distaste reasserts itself. They cannot be blamed for rejecting Mr. Wyndham Lewis's portrait; if hung, it would have looked as out of place as a street-drill in a milliner's shop-window. And Mr. Augustus John cannot be blamed for resigning—the only mystery is how he has managed to put up with his situation for so long as seventeen years. When Mr. Spencer resigned, this journal congratulated the Royal Academy on teaching artists their place—which is not Burlington House. Evidently the lesson required to be repeated. But there is one point which is usually overlooked; an artist who refuses to join, or who leaves, the Royal Academy is making a sacrifice that few painters can easily afford, since pensions are available for widows of R.A.s.

We are all mad. And we in England know it. Mr. Chamberlain, like Lord Baldwin, and like most people one meets, whatever their party, acknowledges the idiocy of racing to a general suicide. But it is difficult to stop because Hitler, being much more mad, thinks himself sane. There is something to be said for the safety of a place like Copenhagen, which is unlikely to be bombed because it cannot resist. But Britain's intermediate position is surely very dangerous. If we adopted a policy of trying to stop war abroad we should be running risks and should need big armaments; as we are withdrawing and refusing to help anyone and daily giving up allies our armament policy is asking for trouble. Mr. Jonathan Griffin puts it well in his new book, *Glass House and Modern War* (Chatto and Windus, 3*s*. 6*d*.). It is an admirably written and informative discussion of the thesis that it is foolish for Britain to spend its resources on making bombers and other offensive weapons rather than in devising every method of home security. He writes: "If I wanted to produce a disastrous war I should equip an exceptionally and temptingly vulnerable country, centre of a coveted Empire, with more and more menacing armaments; because this policy combines three of the strongest incentives to aggression—opportunity, a prize and fear."

* * *

One sign of the confusion is the loose talk about the need for conscription or "national service." As we are not dreaming of any active policy and certainly not of sending a large army to the Continent, it is from a military point of view absurd, and we have the authority of Sir Auckland Geddes, who was responsible for administering it in the last war, that conscription would, from the purely military point of view, do more harm than good. The truth is that it is not a military proposal. If you go through the list of people who advocate compulsion, they are not those who want us to oppose Germany but those who have specialised in persuading us to be complacent to the Fascist advance. It is the *Observer* which is the fervent admirer of Hitler, and Sir Arnold Wilson, who likes discipline for its own sake, and Lord Lothian and Sir Edward Grigg —all conspicuous champions of the school which wants us, in a moderate way no doubt, to imitate Nazi Germany—who advocate regimentation and compulsion. Conscription is not a way of resisting Fascism, but of getting it here.

* * *

The "conference" on Spain which met in the Queen's Hall last Saturday deserved that much-abused name. The great building was filled, and the meeting might easily have become a stereotyped mass demonstration. But the conveners had prepared no resolutions in advance, and Professor Gilbert Murray in his opening speech gave no lead, save on the main point of arms for the Republic. Though some of the politicians, notably Sir Charles Trevelyan, made good speeches, the event of the day was the spontaneous call for action that came from the Trade Union delegates. Out of the 1,200 organisations represented, Trade Unions accounted for over 300. Their first spokesman was emphatic but vague. As the afternoon wore on, however, they grew bolder and more definite. First an official of the South Wales miners and then the spokesman of the Durham coalfield wanted a general strike to win the right for the Republic to buy arms. One of them disclosed the fact that the Mineworkers' Federation has been summoned to consider action. Then we learned that all the Trade Unionists at this Conference had met to appoint a special delegation to the T.U.C. Even more militant was the leader of the Shop stewards in the aircraft industry. The most popular speech of the day, however, came from a woman delegate from Birmingham. It consisted of one sentence. The munition workers, she said, would strike, if the rest of the Movement would look after their children. The foreign policy of this Government seems really to be producing something like a revolutionary temper, spreading among the rank and file. The danger to Spain is rousing them as the threat to Russia did in 1920. The loudest and most prolonged applause came at each mention of the engineers who have led

the way in refusing to co-operate with a pro-Fascist Government, and again at each of the many calls for a Popular Front, Transport House will have hard work to hold back a party in this mood.

* * *

Some time ago I received the prospectus of a new organisation called the Socialist Book Club. To my surprise I saw that its proprietor was a Mr. Batty, a director of Messrs. Foyle's, which already runs the Right Book Club. Catholicity is no doubt a virtue in trade, I said to myself. But after declaring that his Socialist Book would meet a great need, Mr. Batty went on "*There is nothing Left about my club.*" A good jester this Mr. Batty, I thought. But now the plot thickens. The April number of *Left News* (the organ of the Left Book Club) contains a diverting article by Mr. Gollancz who tells the story (with the text of the correspondence) of how the name of the Dean of Canterbury came to be attached to this un-Left Socialist book club, and how it was speedily withdrawn; the same process of misunderstanding and withdrawal has apparently been repeated in the case of Conrad Noel, whose name certainly suggests a Left tendency. Apparently, too, the advertisements of the Socialist Book Club happen to make use of the "fanfare" type which has become associated with Gollancz advertisements. Mr. Gollancz writes most courteously; he is sure that it is entirely by inadvertence that the Socialist Book Club has been presented as if it were in some way connected with the Left or Socialism, as its name rather implies, and therefore a possible competitor with the Left Book Club. But then, Mr. Batty has assured us that there is nothing Left about his club. One is only left wondering what a Socialist Book Club can be unless it is Left? Not, I presume, National Socialist?

* * *

Lady Ottoline Morrell, whose sudden death occurred at the end of last week, is likely to be remembered when many public figures, now incomparably better known, are forgotten. For she was a close friend of those of her contemporaries who seem most certain to interest posterity; and in their memoirs and correspondence she will be prominent. D. H. Lawrence, W. B. Yeats, Katharine Mansfield, Lytton Strachey, Augustus John, Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, T. S. Eliot—I throw out a few names almost at random—not only knew her intimately, but, as I know from those to whom I have talked of her, remained fascinated by the vividness of her personality. She was never interested in persons because they were famous, but she was attracted by the qualities of brain and character that often result in eventual fame. Her own personality made her stand out even in the most brilliant company. It expressed itself in her handwriting—the most exquisite in which I have ever received a letter—her strange, gentle voice, welcoming and almost whinnying, her fine Habsburg features (she was startlingly beautiful as a girl), her necklace of baroque pearls, her clothes—richly coloured silks and velvets belonging to a more picturesque age which she assembled, as she assembled her red lacquer furniture, for their intrinsic beauty. Children in Italian villages would watch with astonishment this tall, surprising *signora forestiere*, as she swept majestically along the streets in brilliant silks and a picture hat, to discover some Primitive in a church. Her indifference to conventional opinions was hardly even courageous, it was an aristocratic unawareness of other people's pettiness; and how well it served her during the war, when she and her husband, at that time Liberal M.P. for Burnley, kept open house for conscientious objectors at Garsington, near Oxford. By these, and by very many writers and painters, her kindness and sympathy will always be remembered. She was one of the most remarkable women of her time.

* * *

Things are looking up. I hear that Mr. Hearst, probably the world's most mischievous press proprietor, is no longer flourishing. Not only are his "art-treasures" being sold, including "the largest collection in the world of Gothic chimney-pieces," but the famous Ranch, the size of several palaces, has been mortgaged, and the mortgage bought by his most hated rivals. If it is true that one of his newspapers, published at Atlanta, Ga., has been losing money at the rate of $1,000 a day for fifteen years, this news is not surprising.

* * *

I am glad to hear that Capek's play at the Savoy Theatre, *Power and Glory*, which was in danger of being taken off for lack of support, is now getting better bookings and looks like having a run. It is a most moving and exciting performance. Its subject could not be more topical; one would expect especial interest in a pacifist play from Czechoslovakia just now. I well remember the last time I saw Capek: it was in 1934 at a gathering of Czech Liberals to listen to Dr. Benes, shortly after Henlein's party had been returned in some force to the Czech Parliament. I remember how remarkably intelligent and humane I thought Dr. Benes and his friends; how willing to consider any reasonable arrangement, but how difficult this situation seemed to me even then, for it was already clear that Henlein did not want "grievances remedied," as English people imagine, but aimed at the domination of Czechoslovakia. According to Nazi doctrine it must always be an outrage for "Slavs" to give orders to "Nordics."

* * *

Last week the *Evening Standard* published one of the greatest of Low's cartoons. It was a drawing of Mussolini, standing sated with the blood of Spain and Abyssinia while Mr. Chamberlain washed his hands in the Mediterranean. The caption was simply, "He took water and washed his hands." I found that some of my friends, especially the younger ones, were rather puzzled about it. They were impressed and the general point got over to them; one of them, knowing nothing of Pilate, sensibly connected the idea of "washing your hands" of guilt with Lady Macbeth. Comparatively few of the generation under thirty seem to recognise even the commonest Biblical allusion. The significance of this break in tradition is not easy to over-estimate. What do you make of much of English literature if you do not know the Bible story and if words rich in association and history come to you flat and poor like the newly invented name of a chemical? And how is the writer to approach his readers with any subtlety if he has to explain common phrases with footnotes, as Mr. T. S. Eliot does for the unusual and erudite references in his poetry? All art relies on the existence of a tradition, on a body of knowledge and ideas taken for granted. So the Greek tragedians built on Homer and British writers on the Bible and Shakespeare. I do not know how far this cut in the literary tradition goes; it may only be a temporary result of the post-war reaction. Perhaps a still younger generation is growing up with a sensible literary knowledge of the Bible which will enable them to make sense of Milton and even of Low's cartoons?

CRITIC

THE SHOPS MUDDLE

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

ON Sunday, February 6th, 1938, no one in England could buy bread, fish or groceries after ten o'clock in the morning, though before they could have been bought all day and night from any shops that cared to stay open. This further restriction on Sunday trading came in, as set down in the Shops (Sunday Trading Restriction) Act of 1936, nine months after the commencement of the Act, which was on May 1st, 1937. Apparently the Government wanted to impose its legislation in two stages, so that the public and the shopkeepers might be soothed by nine months' interval into a state of gentlemanly grumbling, and not view the restrictions as a whole. The bulky phrasing of the seven Shops Acts now in force reads like the pages of some aged Greek grammar, where five columns of exceptions follow one paragraph of rules. The public, as

the pupils, have not the slightest idea why such a book was ever compiled, and even the masters admit that it is an unattractive structure, crammed with academic rules that can never be followed. "In the Shops Acts," I was told by a prominent official responsible for seeing they are carried out, "the rules for closing hours are comparatively simple, but there are so many exemptions that it is quite impossible for every shopkeeper to remain within the law as it is at present."

The rule is that all shops must close by 8 p.m. except on one late day a week, usually a Saturday, when they may shut at 9. On one day in the week they must shut at 1 p.m.; on Sundays they must all shut. Local authorities may order all shops in a district, or all shops of a certain kind, to close before 8 p.m., though not earlier than 7, if two-thirds of the shopkeepers are in favour. But on all days of the week, even on early closing days, sweets and confectionery may be sold until 9.30 p.m., and until 10 p.m. on the late day, and the same hours apply for the sale of smokers' requisites if permission is obtained from the local authority; the early closing rule does not apply to the sale of meat, fish, milk, bread, flowers, vegetables and fruit and other perishable foodstuffs, which may be sold until 8 p.m. on ordinary days. But medicines and newly cooked provisions and cooked or partly cooked tripe may be sold on any day into the small hours, if assistants are not employed in the transactions without obtaining compensation. After the new restrictions the only commodities that can be sold on Sundays all day are newly cooked provisions, fresh milk and fresh fruit, flowers and vegetables (but no tinned stuff), smoking requisites, medicinal goods, newspapers and sweets.

It is over the sale of foodstuffs that the greatest absurdities occur. Many small food stores sell ham-rolls, which they make up themselves. As ham is a newly cooked provision it may be sold up to any hour, and the bread of the roll is allowed to be sold with it, though no bread can be sold separately after 8 o'clock. If a customer bought the ham and then the roll afterwards, the shopkeeper would be open to prosecution. A cheese-roll can only be sold after 8 on one condition, that the customer takes a bite out of it before leaving the shop; this makes the roll partially consumed, and so a "refreshment consumed on premises," which may be legally had after normal closing hours.

"But really," a small shopkeeper said to me, "the inspectors who come round don't know themselves what can be sold and what can't. One of them told me once that I could sell potato crisps after hours because they were a newly cooked provision, like ham or beef, and other inspectors say you can't. And if the crisps are newly cooked—though they might be a month old, for all the inspectors know—then what about soups, which are cooked all right before they leave the factory? I expect some of them would say those packets of almonds and raisins count as groceries, and so can't be sold after 8 o'clock, and some would say they were confectionery, and could be sold up to 9.30. You never know where you are. I'm allowed to have one of those automatic machines outside the shop provided I don't touch it or have anything to do with it myself after closing hours. If I so much as show a customer where to put the money in, then I'm liable to be had up; and of course I can't fill the machine if it is emptied during the evening. But, one inspector told me, it would be perfectly legal for me to change for a customer a tin of soup, for instance, that he had got out of the machine for another one from my own stock. That is, if I go over the threshold of the shop to do so. We none of us know where we stand."

There is a strong difference of opinion in other quarters too. On January 21st of this year the Lord Mayor dismissed several cases of prosecution under the Shops Acts, at the Mansion House, and said in so many words that he thought it was a ridiculous law, and that he would impose no penalties. On the previous day, at the Guildhall, heavy fines were imposed for exactly similar offences, and the offenders were told that they would have been punished more heavily if the law allowed. In a local London court a shopkeeper was fined fourteen guineas for selling salmon and shrimp paste at five minutes past eight, as the paste was a fish product.

Naturally enough, there have been numerous attempts at evasion. It was argued in court that if soup-tins were pierced then their contents became perishable, and therefore legally saleable after hours on an early closing day. Lids were taken off sardine tins, and the covers left off pickle jars. But, though there is no section in the Acts dealing with evasion of the law, it is now a general ruling that such attempts to get round the Acts are illegal. But further difficulties arise from this. For instance, corned beef is often stocked in large tins; if a shopkeeper opens one of these tins to sell a half-pound of beef, he is technically rendering it perishable, and is therefore subject to a fine. For this reason, and also because it is doubtful if all inspectors would consider corned beef to be a newly cooked provision, poor people are often prevented from buying a cheap product like corned beef after hours, though the more expensive meats like ham and tongue can be sold at all times.

Several shopkeepers have tried an interesting experiment in law evasion; they put their goods on the counter and told the customers to help themselves, laying down the money in place of the goods they took. If they did not handle the money till next morning, the shopkeepers argued, it could not be said they were serving a customer; the process was merely an extension of the legal automatic machine method. But as local authorities have to approve automatic machines that are set up for the sale of goods, it was ruled that the shopkeepers had no case. More successful were the Eldorado ice-cream company (ice-cream is counted as a confectionery), whose assistants were selling their wares from box-tricycles after 9.30 p.m. Lord Hewart, reversing the decision of the magistrates, ruled that a box-tricycle was not a shop, nor a place, and therefore the assistants could not be proceeded against under the Shops Acts. A tobacconist, sitting with his feet up on the counter, lights blazing, at five past twelve one night, got away with his contention that he had not kept open late, but had opened early the next day. But those are isolated escapes in a long list of convictions, of which there were over 3,000 last year in London alone.

Many convictions are obtained through the unofficial spy system of the large federations—the grocers' federations and others—who are particularly opposed to Sunday opening at all. They resent the small shopkeeper's being able to sell foodstuffs to the public when they themselves are shut. As they employ numbers of assistants it is necessary for them to close on Sundays, or by law the assistants can claim a whole day's holiday in the middle of the week, in addition to their usual half-day. Under the new Sunday restriction it is still possible for partial exemption orders to be granted by local authorities for the sale of the three restricted commodities, bread, fish and groceries, up till ten in the morning, if two-thirds of the shopkeepers are in favour. Members of the big federations are more often than not in the position to persuade the local councils not to grant the orders, and so the small shopkeeper is prevented from trading. Sometimes, on the other hand, the small shopkeepers themselves say they would be glad to close on Sundays if only they could be sure that their rivals do not stay open and make money; this appears to be a somewhat dog-in-the-manger attitude, as if all should be compelled not to work because a section are not inclined to do so.

The reasons for the present restrictions break down on three counts. If they are framed for the benefit of the shopkeepers and their assistants, to protect them from an unnatural desire to work, why is there a host of exemptions which allow extra working hours for certain classes of shop? If for the benefit of the big federations, why are the automatic machines allowed, where the public may buy at all times after hours foodstuffs of a kind that the big federations themselves are selling? If the Government have the public's interests at heart, why do the further Sunday restrictions just imposed, and the general muddle in the execution of the Acts, whip

the public into a continual grumble at the stupidity of the regulations? When a few crumbs nibbled from a roll can make all the difference between exemption and a fine of five guineas, it is time such an Act was changed. If owner-shopkeepers are allowed to open at all after normal closing hours for the sale of food, it would be infinitely more satisfactory if they were allowed to sell all they had, irrespective of the varying classes of their products, instead of being hedged round with an unwieldy mass of restrictions about the sale of goods which are often incapable of exact definition.

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to E. Bassett.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Extracts should not be sent without their context. The article or passage should be sent in full with the proposed excerpt marked.

Perhaps it will be some comfort to his wife that at the time he crashed he was travelling faster than any man has ever travelled on a motor cycle before.—Writer in *Sunday Express*.

In Catalonia, since the Spanish war began, 1,553 people have been killed, 2,007 injured in 215 air raids.

On the roads of Britain in the same period of time 10,741 people have been killed, 360,326 injured.

War is ceasing to be mankind's greatest peril.—*Daily Express*.

The arrival at Southampton to-day of Don Bradman and his colleagues meant that other topics of conversation will fade into insignificance for the whole of the summer.—*Aberdeen Press and Journal*.

Why be afraid of Air Raids, purchase one of Atlas Motor Cycles and be able to get away.—Advt. in local paper.

Mrs. C. E. Chennells, chairman of Dunstable Women's Liberal Association, was in earnest when, at the annual meeting on Thursday, she appealed for a recruiting drive.

"I am so serious," she said, "that I feel that even before we owe our duty to God we owe our duty to our town and our country."—*Luton News*.

What with wholesale massacre in Spain and China . . . there is no denying that clouds are black and threatening. But there is still a patch of blue sky. . . . It is the Wine and Food Society, now in the fifth year of its useful existence.—*Wine and Food*, Spring Number.

Presentation at Court. . . . It means taking part, if only for a second, in the multi-coloured pageantry of British history. It means joining, if only for a moment, the brilliant procession of men and women on whom a British King has smiled.—Mr. Beverley Nichols in *Sunday Express*.

The clouds had cleared in the morning and the West Hants Club was its cheerful, sunny self, with watchers swarming down the garden path from the centre court to the little centre court and browsing by the side court as the fancy took them.—*Times*.

CATALONIA FIGHTS ON

[FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN BARCELONA]

WISHFUL thinkers and the misinformed must finally abandon the idea that the Fascists have won or will soon win the international war being fought at the expense of Spain. The spring Aragon offensive of the Quadruple Alliance—Franco, Hitler, Mussolini and Non-Intervention—has failed. Its purpose was to end the war. It has succeeded in galvanising a harried people into a heightened resistance.

Many brigades of the old Madrid army are now in Catalonia. Foreign military observers believe that these blood-baptised troops, seconded by newly trained reinforcements, will at least hold all the Catalan lines. During the last three weeks the army morale has improved. So has its equipment. Much new war material can be seen at the front and on the roads.

Catalonia remains in intimate contact with central Spain. Air-mail is exchanged between Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona every day. A twenty-four hour steamer service connects Valencia and Barcelona. I heard the Minister here radio-telephone Madrid. Franco has cut Republican Spain in two, but the parts live and function.

Miaja, the father of the original Madrid Army, has to-day been called upon to build another. He has plenty of raw recruits, plenty of enthusiasm and Jesus Hernandez to start with. Hernandez, the former Minister of Education, is quickly restoring political commissars to their previous status and numerical strength. In this political war an army which thinks politically must be kept politically alert. In other respects it should be a regular army. Caballero and especially Prieto made the mistake of crippling the institution of political commissars because they objected to having too many Communist commissars. I think Negrin's superior instinct will prevent him falling into this error. Political commissars are the agents of the civilian population on the battlefield. This tie explains the tremendous tenacity, despite unprecedented punishment, of the Republican armed forces. Aviation is important, but politics are no less an effective weapon.

The chief bourgeois Catalan leader, until recently suspected of pro-armistice leanings, demanded the other day that he should be given more work. He was reacting to Franco's decree, promulgated when the Generalissimo thought he would occupy Catalonia, abolishing Catalan autonomy and suppressing the use of the Catalan language. This rebel measure truly reflects the social ineptitude of the classes which support Franco. Denikin lost the Ukraine, Yudenich failed to take Petrograd, because of similar disregard of the susceptibilities of racial minorities. Whether it is on the Steppes or the Sierras, the mentality is always the same. Salamanca's edict against Catalan autonomy has been worth an army corps to the Republic. The Catalan middle-class, always very nationalistic, sees the oppression which a Fascist victory promises and is putting its shoulder to the wheel of the lumbering loyalist chariot. In the last fortnight the Catalan attitude has visibly changed.

Simultaneously the problem of anarchist collaboration with the Government has come nearer a solution. Here too politics create a new military potential. Two days ago when I was returning from Tortosa, which despite astute Franco propaganda is not a seaplane base and could not be one, my chauffeur had to stop a passing car to borrow a canful of petrol to take us to the next pump. In the car were the major and captain of the Twenty-fifth Division. The major is a Communist, the captain an Anarchist. The Communist had been wounded eight days before. He showed me his wounds. The bullet went in on the left side of his neck and passed out just in front of his adam's apple. He talked hoarsely and probably always will. He said he would soon be back at the front. The Anarchist, who was still in civilian clothes, though carrying two revolvers, had been hit in the forearm recently, and it hung limp and useless by his side. He too would return to the front shortly. I asked him how he could fight in that condition. He replied proudly, "I am a dynamitero. I will work with one arm and direct the operations." The Communist major declared "I am a Spaniard and am defending Spain." The Anarchist declared, "I was always opposed to governments and therefore to armies, but now I am protecting my country against invasion. If we were to leave it to the Left Republicans to defend the Republic it might die."

Whatever the reasons for the evolution the fact is that the Anarchists criticise less and conform more. This political change is an additional military asset. The civilised practices of the loyalists encourage the belief that rapprochement with other political groups is not inconceivable. When Negrin reformed the Cabinet recently he wanted to keep Prieto in the Government. In that event Caballero or a Caballero lieutenant might also have entered the new ministry. Contacts

between members of the Negrin ministry and the Caballero faction continue.

Very late, after bitter costly lessons, the Republic is starting to move on almost all cylinders. To direct the titanic effort is a gruelling task. First there is the business of keeping the fronts intact despite the enemy's superiority in armaments. To-day the weakest line seems to be the one between the wedge to the Mediterranean, from the Ebro in the south to Vinaroz—the Italian corridor one might call it—and Castellon. If Franco can break through towards Valencia it will be a big victory. He has mobility and hundreds of new aeroplanes and might push at another point too. At this stage a big breach would further embarrass the military situation without being decisive. Barcelona nevertheless carries these responsibilities and cares courageously. The economic difficulties are no less trying. Catalonia had a peacetime population of approximately three million. Now a million and a half refugees are added. I have seen these unfortunates housed in the Barcelona churches subsisting on beans and bread soup, camping in thousands in olive groves, getting lifts with their bundles on military lorries and crowding the roads from the Ebro to Barcelona with their muledrawn carts laden high with mattresses, ewe lambs, chicken coops and flower sacks, and surmounted by an old grandmother or baby, unable like the rest of the family to trudge literally hundreds of kilometres behind the vehicle. They aggravate Catalonia's food stringency. One has only to look into the eyes of those who watch you eat a hasty picnic lunch of imported food en route to the front, to know that this country is hungry. At Villa Franca the other day, where my car stopped for repairs, I collected almost all the village children by starting to distribute a half-inch square of chocolate to the boys and girls who watched the operation. They hadn't tasted sweets in almost two years. Couldn't a few million kind folks abroad forgo their candy for a fortnight to give these children a treat?

Next to food the electricity shortage is giving the Government many a headache. To be sure a smoke pall still hovers over Barcelona factory districts. Juan Comorera, the Catalan Minister of Economy, told me that all the munition factories were working full blast on power from their own Diesels or coal, or remaining hydro stations. Half the export industries are still functioning normally and more are expected to be brought into operation with coal imported from England and elsewhere; but civilian lighting and urban transportation are curtailed (in Barcelona, however, many autobuses appeared this week) and industries that are working for domestic consumption are seriously handicapped.

To face such problems, while fighting two great Powers and disloyal generals, requires a special arsenal of spirit and convictions. The Spanish Republic possesses it. The mettle of the Catalans has not yet been tried during this war. Catalonia is also fortunate in being the richest portion of Spain. The other day my automobile broke down at Vendrell, a large village about thirty kilometres from Barcelona. I had three hours to get acquainted with the place. It had well-stocked private stores, selling shirts, caps, toilet paper, soap, flashlights, radios, textiles, toys, baskets, shoes, fountain pens, watches, stationery, ink, paints, woollens, displayed by the tailors' shops, corsets, electric appliances, sewing-machines, etc., etc. The inhabitants were nicely dressed and the women were heavily perfumed. The cafés found numerous patrons, as did the restaurants. I got into telephone connection with Barcelona in forty seconds. All this bespeaks material reserves and the normal organisation of life—in other words a vast capacity for further resistance.

Postscript.—Anyone still unconvinced that this is a democratic country might ponder on the following fact. General Asensio, formerly Caballero's Assistant Minister of War, is under arrest, charged with treason. While in prison he has written a book justifying his conduct in the war. The book has been published and is sold openly in Barcelona book stores. Asensio has sent autographed copies of the book to several members of the Government.

TOO EASY

"MODERN Life Too Easy." When I saw this heading in a newspaper, I could no more help reading the article that followed it than I can help reading articles under the heading, "The Strain of Modern Life." There are two principal dangers, apparently, that threaten human beings nowadays: one of them is ease and the other is strain. And the worst of it is that no sooner do we think that we have at last discovered the perfect way to avoid strain than we find ourselves entangled in the meshes of ease, and no sooner have we struggled free from the ignoble bonds of ease than we realise that we are suffering from unpleasant symptoms of strain. Thus, between the two alternatives we live a frying-pan-and-fire existence; and all that our advisers can suggest in a crisis is that we should do the opposite of what we happen to be doing at the time.

Strain, however, is a comparatively modern peril. No one thought anything of the strain of life in the days of Abraham and Isaac. St. Paul seems to have approved of it, and the greatest moralists of Greece and Rome recommended it as a means of improving the character. In England, too, the ethical current has always run strongly pro-strain. The schools as well as the Sunday-schools have all counselled the young to live laborious days, as the only way of making the most of life. "No gains without pains," they told us, never pausing to reflect that they might be driving us into brain-fever. I have even heard a youth praised for working at his books fourteen hours a day. That was before the newspapers had discovered the strain of modern life. I wonder whether human beings felt it so badly before the Press discovered it.

The dangers of ease, on the other hand, have always been widely recognised. In ancient times, if a poet wrote in favour of comfort and indolence, he was regarded as a rather comic indulger in paradoxes. Horace, who wrote charmingly of the Epicurean way of living, was not himself faithful to his philosophy, but in his more impassioned moments would keep bursting into panegyrics on the hardy upbringing of the young and the life of self-denial. In our Roman histories we were told that the Carthaginians under Hannibal collapsed mainly because they took their ease during the winter in Capua. Hence, early in life we came to look on ease as the great destroyer. There were many people who doubted the virility of Keats's character because in his poetry he seemed to be more in favour of ease than a great poet ought to be. As for Robert Louis Stevenson, with his "Apology for Idlers," he was forgiven only on the understanding that he worked like a nigger and did not believe a word he wrote in that essay.

I fancy, however, that, even if we had not been taught to look down on ease in our youth, we should have despised it. The contempt of ease is instinctive in most of us. It is not ease that small boys strive after in their games. The more uncomfortable the game, the more they love it. If they play croquet, it is condescendingly, for it is not rough enough or dangerous enough to be taken seriously. As a small boy once said to me, "Did you ever see a man carried off the croquet-lawn with a broken leg?" "No," said I, "or writhing on the ground in pain." "Or so much as a broken nose," he said; "it isn't a game at all." That, I think, represents a common attitude to games. The fiercer the struggle, and the less attractive the game is to a genuine lover of ease, the more popular it is. That is why, at an early age, we cease to take any pleasure in playing those admirable games, Happy Families and Snap, except with very young children. If we found a boy of eighteen with a passion for Happy Families, we should attribute this to delayed development. There are no wounds given and taken in the card-games of the nursery, and this absence of violent conflict palls. I doubt, indeed, whether any card-game would become the rage among grown-up people if it were not associated with gambling—gambling which banishes the spirit of ease and introduces risk to the purse, if not to life and limb.

As for Rugby football, it obviously owes its popularity to the fact that in a good match the player has a pretty hard time of it from the kick-off to the last whistle. It is a game that I love as a spectator, but to play in it is too like taking part in a street-riot to appeal to a naturally indolent being. Why should the young love to be caught by the legs and hurled violently to the ground? Why should they aspire to be bumped and thumped for eighty minutes by men in a state of far worse frenzy than a flogging schoolmaster? Why should they enjoy lying on the ground with monstrous feet kicking wildly all round them and with giants tumbling on their ribs like buffaloes that have lost their footing? There is only one explanation—the human passion for anything rather than peace and quiet. Even cricket, which to some people looks so harmless, is a game in which the players take risks that in ordinary life would make men pale with apprehension. No one who took an Epicurean view of life would willingly stand up to a fast bowler. Mr. C. B. Fry the other day described Woolley, after playing an innings against Gregory and Macdonald, as looking like a Union Jack. And, indeed, one remembers that great batsman's expression of anguish as he rubbed his arms, legs or kidneys after a blow from one of those Australian cannon-balls. Yet Woolley went on playing cricket. Clearly he is one of that great company of ease-haters who have made themselves masters of the world.

Nor is it only in their games that human beings reveal their antipathy to ease. Even in their politics they pursue what to me seems hardship and misery. Almost any leader who promises his followers a really bad time is secure of popularity. When General Goering told his people that they would have to choose between guns and butter, not one of them apparently had the common sense to say, "Give me butter." Now, all lovers of ease are lovers of butter, and it must be concluded from the reception given to General Goering's speech that the love of ease has all but disappeared from Germany. It used to be thought that the best way for a leader to become popular was to promise his followers bread and circuses. The experience of modern times seems to disprove this. It is much better to tell people to tighten their belts, work like steam-engines, and prepare for the shambles. Then they begin really to love you.

If people preferred ease to strain, they could achieve their ideal fairly easy in modern circumstances. The riches of the world have increased so enormously that it ought to be within the capacity of a few clever men to devise a system under which everybody would possess enough money to live in comfort, if not in luxury. All that is needed is a general agreement that a life of ease is really desirable. The human being, unfortunately, is a curious mixture. He believes that a life of ease is desirable for himself and for his children, but that it is ruinous to the character of other people. Why, even the cinemas and the bicycles of the poor shock many a wealthy moralist as symptoms of spreading corruption. The laziness of a poor man has, for some reason or other, always offended the moral sense more than the laziness of a rich man. Hence there is little enthusiasm for a state of society in which the dustman and the roadsweeper would be able to loll in the lounges of big hotels like the children of stockbrokers. I have heard an elderly man with a good income thanking Heaven that he would be under the sod before such a state of affairs arrived.

Even I, a lover of ease for myself, am not quite sure how far ease is good for other people. I cannot imagine any Utopia which, with everybody at leisure for most of the day, would not be a little boring. I desire to approach Utopia rather than to live in it. I have inherited a superstitious belief in the dignity of labour, and a world in which everybody did very little work would for me lose half its interest. If work were all but abolished, indeed, and we could supply nearly all our wants by pressing knobs or turning on switches, I suspect that the human race would rise in violent revolution and smash all the machines in existence in order to escape from a too easy life and get back to the more exacting conditions of our forefathers. There seems, however, to be very little prospect of a life of ease for anybody for some years to come. The moralists need not be alarmed. Those who prefer the strain of modern life should be exceedingly happy. Y. Y.

GENES

"It's breeding that counts," says the proverb: referring to the quality rather than the process. But it was only in 1900 that the world learnt how breeding works. Mendel had actually made the fundamental discovery, that the characters of a plant or animal are controlled by separate hereditary factors, as early as 1866. But science still talked in terms of "blood" and "race," and his papers lay neglected in the Proceedings of the Brunn Natural History Club till the end of the century.

We now know that even if an animal appears to vary continuously, say from tall to short through all possible intermediates, the continuity is only superficial. Its height is really determined by a finite number of hereditary units, or genes, which are fairly stable and can combine and recombine but cannot lose their identity and mix with one another. Their stability is not absolute, and their rare changes are the basis of evolution. Biologically they are the most important part of the organism, which is simply a result of the way in which a collection of genes have reacted with one another and with the environment.

We are beginning to know something about the nature of the genes. About fifteen years ago, Morgan and his colleagues showed conclusively that they lie in the nuclei of the cells, on the tiny gelatinous rods which appear during cell division and are known as chromosomes. In each chromosome the genes are arranged in a row. For a long time nothing much was known about the material of which the chromosomes are made; it was non-committally called chromatin and was supposed to be a protein. Within the last few years Heitz has shown that many, if not all, chromosomes consist of two different sorts of chromatin which stain differently in microscopical preparations. The greater part of a chromosome is made of euchromatin, and it is here that the genes lie; but there is usually a section which is "inert" and contains no genes, and this part is made of heterochromatin. Again the unspecific names show how little we understand the difference; but there is some evidence that the heterochromatic part is particularly concerned in the complicated movements which the chromosomes perform at cell division, so that inert is perhaps a bad way of describing it.

In ordinary preparations the chromosomes appear as solid lumps or rods. Refinements in technique have shown that this is deceptive. The chromosome, or at least the euchromatic part, can be seen to be made of a thin thread which is coiled in a tight spiral, or even coiled twice into a coiled coil, like a lamp filament. The genes are thought to lie on this thread, and they must have some internal spiral-like structure which causes the thread as a whole to coil up.

In exceptional cases, the thread remains permanently straight and uncoiled, and therefore easy to examine. By a piece of really amazingly good luck, the best example of this is in the salivary glands of flies; we happen to know more about the genetics of a certain fly, Drosophila, than about those of any other organism. In Drosophila salivary glands the chromosome threads are spread out for the inspection of our microscopes; and, by a peculiar process of growth which is not fully understood, they become thick enough to be fairly easy to see. They are about a tenth of a millimetre long and a few hundredths wide. Each chromosome is striped, consisting of darkly staining chromatin bands connected by short lengths of unstaining fibrous material. The bands must obviously correspond in some way with the genes which are lying in a row along the chromosome; and, by breaking off parts of the chromosome with X-rays, determining microscopically what part is lost and genetically which genes are missing, maps can

be made showing where the genes are placed. The maps are fairly accurate, but it was uncertain whether the genes lie in the dark bands or in the connecting fibres until Muller succeeded in knocking out a small section of chromosome containing only two genes and showing that this involved the loss of only part of a band and none of the fibrous material. Thus either the genes are made of euchromatin, or they are always closely associated with it.

On the basis of Muller's discovery we can, from the number of bands, make an approximate estimate of the total number of genes. In Drosophila it is about five to ten thousand; man has about a thousand times as much chromatin per nucleus, and may have a few million genes, which ought to be sufficient to account even for his complicated characteristics. Of course, many of these genes are probably concerned with fundamental aspects of development and will be the same in all men; the variation between individuals may be due to changes in a much smaller number of units.

Muller could also give rough estimates of the size of the gene. Its length is about a ten thousandth of a millimetre, its width about ten or twenty times less. Its volume is about a hundred-million-millionth of a cubic millimetre; slightly too small to be seen with the best possible microscope. Most chemical molecules are considerably smaller even than this, while bacteria, in general, are bigger. Between molecules and bacteria, on the scale of size, we have viruses such as those responsible for various animal and plant diseases. The similarity between viruses and genes may be more fundamental than merely one of size. Like genes, viruses can reproduce themselves inside cells but not outside, and can also produce changes, usually pathological ones, in the cells they inhabit. But although they can only grow and reproduce when enclosed in living material or something very like it, they can exist outside cells and pass from one organism to another. They are thus rather more independent than genes, and are often spoken of as the lowest form of life, representing the first stage as life evolved from non-living matter. In the last few years some viruses, particularly those causing plant diseases like tobacco mosaic, have been obtained in a pure crystalline form, which makes it likely that they consist of a single chemical substance. It is a fundamental discovery that a pure substance can show so many of the properties of life as a virus is known to possess. One of the most seductive problems is to discover the chemical nature of these substances. X-ray analysis is rapidly giving at least the broad outline of an answer.

There are other ways in which genes differ from viruses. Thus genes have two "sticky faces" which enable them to join up into single, but not into branching, rows. And these joins are not purely mechanical, because the developmental effect of a gene depends to some extent on the nature of its near neighbours. But the similarities are probably more fundamental than the differences, and even in the most highly evolved animals the genes are still much like viruses. Thus even man is reduced, in the egg and sperm, to units of the kind with which the evolution of life originally began. It is easy to show that sexual reproduction is very advantageous to an evolving organism, but it is surprising that no way has been found of reaping its advantages without having to go back to the beginning and start from scratch in every generation.

C. H. W.

Correspondence

THE BRITISH CHARACTER

SIR,—Your quotation from Sir Samuel Hoare's vigorous oratory at Geneva is very timely. But there is a passage from another speech of his which is in some respects even more interesting. He spoke at a dinner in London on November 26th, 1935, in the presence of several Ambassadors. In this speech he gave an account of the British character and ended with this description of British idealism:

> I come now to the third of the characteristics to which I have alluded, a sound instinct upon the big issues. It is a quality which needs a good deal of imagination behind it. Whilst we try to apply our minds constantly to the facts of the case, whilst we constantly wish to be realists, whilst we wish to avoid being drawn into the world of theory and surmise, there is none the less behind our attitude to these great questions deep sentiment and, I believe, a far-seeing imagination. There is a deep strain of idealism in our attitude towards foreign affairs. It is not one of the things that we care to talk about very much, but there are certain causes which rouse in the hearts of each one of us a whole-hearted response: the right of the individual to freedom of thought and freedom of action; the right of nations to self-government; the loyal fulfilment of undertakings and agreements; the fair treatment of less civilised races; the common endeavour to find a system whereby men may be enabled to lay aside their disputes and to work for the good of all. These, indeed, are the big issues that profoundly move us, and upon which British instinct has usually shown itself sound and stable.

These happy phrases might be of use to Lord Halifax when he urges the League to reverse its earlier decisions on Abyssinia.

X. Y. Z.

LABOUR AND THE POPULAR FRONT

SIR,—Your anonymous Liberal correspondent can see nothing in the National Executive's disapproval of a Popular Front but "a commonplace desire of a party machine to win an election without dividing the spoils." He suggests that the refusal to co-operate electorally with the Liberal Party is a deliberate sacrifice of high idealism to the pursuit of political advantage.

May I suggest that this is the reverse of the truth and that what political opportunism there is may be suspected of springing from the small Liberal Party's desire to regain that position of influence which it has already twice used to destroy the progressive majority?

The idea of the Popular Front seems to me to be based on two profound miscalculations. The first is that by the formation of it Mr. Chamberlain will be sufficiently impressed to hold the election earlier than he otherwise intends. Is this seriously considered to be likely by anyone with the slightest knowledge of the actualities of politics? And, if he does not, but postpones it—as he constitutionally may—for another eighteen months, what happens to the one and only reason given for the formation of the Popular Front that it is a crisis measure to enforce the *immediate* reversal of the country's policy?

The second miscalculation is the attitude of the Liberals. The basis of belief that a Popular Front could win an election which Labour alone would lose is the assumption that the Liberal vote would go against the Government. There is no evidence for the likelihood of this and considerable evidence to the contrary.

The five divisions of Bristol are a very fair epitome of the electoral situation.

In Bristol Central, there was a straight fight between Conservative and Labour. Labour held the seat in 1929, lost it by a turnover of over 11,000 in 1931 and in 1935 was only 1,500 short of winning it back.

In Bristol East, Labour has held the seat in all three of the last elections; but the intervention of the Liberal candidate in a 1931 by-election revealed that the Liberal vote was otherwise cast for the Government.

In Bristol North, the Liberal member deserted his party after the election and is now a member of the Government.

In Bristol South, held by Labour, the entire 1929 Liberal vote of 18,000 went Conservative in 1931. In 1935, 10,000 remained Conservative; 6,000 voted Labour, in spite of the appearance of a Liberal candidate who polled only 2,000.

In Bristol West, held continuously by the Conservatives, the 1929 Liberal vote of 10,000 went solidly for the Conservative in 1931, and, in the continued absence of a Liberal candidate in 1935 seems to have remained there.

It would appear, therefore, that the vast proportion of Liberals prefer to vote in times of crisis (for both 1931 and 1935 were "crisis" elections) with the Conservatives; and that those individual Liberals who prefer the progressive cause will vote for Labour even when there is a Liberal candidate in the field.

At the risk of laying myself open to the charge that I am not unprejudiced, may I cite as my second example what such an alliance would entail, in my own constituency?

At the last election in East Dorset, the Conservatives polled 25,520; the Liberals, 11,349, and Labour, 10,823. As the Labour vote here is 526 less than the Liberal, a Popular Front would involve my standing down in favour of the Liberal candidate. To such a course, if my own and the National Executive should

advise it, I personally have no objection whatever. But the factor to be considered is the reaction of the ordinary Labour voter.

He sees that, since 1929, the Labour vote has steadily increased by 4,000 (increasing even in the disastrous year 1931), while the Liberal vote has declined by over 7,000; but he is now to be offered as his "progressive" candidate one whose votes (in other places at previous elections) have been drawn from those Liberals who otherwise vote Conservative; and whose proclaimed attitude to Labour is that the country must be saved from the "disaster" of a Labour Government.

That is what, apart from all rhetorical generalisations, the "Popular Front" means in practice in the constituencies. And I do not believe (though, of course, I have no means of certain knowledge) that the average Labour voter in them has that enthusiasm for it which is alleged by a section of the press.

I have confined myself to the two main practical objections to the Popular Front—that, even if it could be formed, it could not effect a change of government and it would not be in any real sense a "progressive" alliance.

Those Liberals who are progressive are voting and will vote for Labour anyhow; those—and they appear to be the great majority—who are not are better as enemies than as allies.

That is why I would suggest to your correspondent that the Executive decision which he deplores as treachery to the causes of liberty and justice and peace is, on the contrary, a refusal to betray them.

HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON

The East Dorset Divisional Labour Party,
Labour Headquarters, Wimborne Road, Poole.

SIR,—One danger of the negative stubbornness of official Labour may, I suggest, be that they will finally collapse under overwhelming pressure and have to accept an arrangement which will not work. The Popular Front in France was compelled by the Radicals to confine its programme within the limits of the capitalist system. That meant in effect that social reforms could be carried out only with the voluntary co-operation of French big business.

The result was a failure. The big stay-in strikes frightened big business and the Senate into accepting the social reforms of the Popular Front. But from the first day of the first Blum Government until to-day, there has been unceasing and unscrupulous hostility and sabotage by French big business of the Popular Front's social legislation.

We cannot afford to repeat that experiment here. The only way to stop sabotage of a British Left Government from the City and F.B.I. is by measures of economic collectivisation and control going at least as far as Labour's Immediate Programme (clarified and supplemented, if necessary, by the proposals of the Next Five Years group and the views advocated by Sir Arthur Salter). Moreover, the American and French reforms are matters which for the most part have long been covered by British social legislation. To tackle unemployment, housing, transport and other urgent problems here, let alone lowering international trade barriers, we shall be obliged to break the opposition of vested interests, which can be done only by nationalising some and controlling others.

Finally, the war policy of the present Government is dictated by capitalist class interests and under the political pressure of powerful elements in the City and F.B.I. The peace policy of a Left Government would have to be carried out against the bitter opposition of these vested interests, for it would consist essentially in sacrificing them and the interests of Imperialism generally to the interests of peace. Hence the profound truth of the following words by the late Arthur Henderson, whose views surely have weight on this issue: "Many years of work in the cause of peace, culminating in two and a quarter years as Foreign Secretary and three years as President of the Disarmament Conference, have convinced me that . . . the roots of war lie deep in the private profit-making system of production. . . . Those who do not face the necessity for breaking the vested interests that blindly push Governments into war in their scramble for profits are only playing with the problem of peace," (*Labour's Way to Peace*).

In short, in order to work for peace, to tackle urgent domestic problems, and indeed to be master in its own house, to be able to do anything or to serve at all, a Left Government will have to conquer the vested interests of capitalism. This means measures of collectivisation and control. It also means readiness to assume whatever emergency powers are necessary to overcome the sabotage of such interests and to deal with the resistance of the House of Lords. At Southport in 1934 Labour adopted a clear-cut policy on the important question of making Parliamentary democracy work well enough to give effect to the will of the people as expressed at the polls.

In this country the Labour Party alone is at least 80 per cent. of the proposed Peace Alliance. The Co-operators, the Communists and the I.L.P. are all convinced Socialists. Therefore Labour should take the lead and should tell the Liberals:

"We want a Peace Alliance. We, like you, recognise the tragic urgency and literally vital importance, for the sake of peace, of turning out the National Government. We do not wish to take advantage of this situation to compel you to accept Socialism. But neither can we accept the suggestion that the condition for the Peace Alliance must be that nine-tenths of its constituent members should renounce their Socialism in deference to the views of the remaining one-tenth. For we believe that Socialism is part of the price of peace. A small minority must expect to make bigger concessions than a big majority, if the two are to work together. We must work out, in addition to a common foreign policy, an agreed home policy. This must contain three parts: First, measures of social reform. Second, such measures of collectivisation and control of vested interests as are necessary to enable us to carry out our social reforms and to work for peace. Third, such measures of Parliamentary reform as are needed to carry out our programme and to meet the resistance that may be expected from vested interests. The second and third categories are just as important as the first, for the first will never be carried out without them. We think Labour's Immediate Programme and our Southport report on Parliamentary procedure must be the basis for an agreement on points two and three. And we are willing, in return for you Liberals accepting them, to put through a measure of electoral reform, such as, e.g., the Single Alternative Vote, which would give you Liberals your democratic rights."

If Labour took the lead on those lines, we might not get in all the Liberal leaders, but we should have a solid Peace Alliance, including all Liberals who are not Tories in disguise or of the type who believe the only way to avoid the sin of extremism is to remain sitting on the fence.

"RANK-AND-FILE"

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

SIR,—The General Preface to the Air Raids Precautions Handbooks tells us that in the event of war we must anticipate attack by poison gas, incendiary and high explosive bombs.

It is significant that no gas has been used in China or Spain. Does this mean that General Franco's army and the Japanese are too humane to use it? I think not. It is because gas is a difficult weapon to use, being partially dependent for its success on weather conditions.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many people find much to complain about in the recommendations of the Air Raids Precautions Department. They seem obsessed with this idea of gas-attack. And even here their recommendations are open to the gravest criticism and it is far from reassuring to find such scientific studies of the Precautions as that published by the Cambridge Scientists' Anti-War Group dismissed by the Government with a reference to the "political bias" of the investigators. Even the House of Commons does not question the integrity of Professor William Bone, however, and his criticism of the Salisbury Plain experiments so vaguely described by Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd remains unanswered. In any case, it must be apparent that the only effect of 100 per cent. efficient anti-gas measures would be to compel an enemy to attack with other weapons.

When we consider the other weapons, of which incendiary and high explosive bombs are admitted by the A.R.P. Department, the full impotence of protective measures becomes apparent. To make matters worse, the Handbooks continually speak as though only one of these three methods would be used in any single raid, and this convenient assumption is flatly contradicted by many military authorities who anticipate that a preliminary attack by high explosive and incendiary bombs would be followed by gas and, in some cases, by machine-gunning. It must be obvious to everyone that, as Professor J. B. S. Haldane said recently, there is no protection for the ordinary citizen against the high explosive bomb. Is it possible to provide any adequate protection against this form of attack? According to Mr. Simmonds, Conservative Member for Birmingham, the cost of splinter-proof shelters would be about £140 per head. Some estimates are lower and others range up to £250 per head. If Mr. Simmonds' figure is approximately correct it would cost more than £6,000,000,000 to provide such shelters for the population of this

country. And this is not all. The question of the storage or protection of food supplies is equally pressing and little satisfaction can be derived from the evasive utterances of Sir Thomas Inskip.

One thing is quite clear. If any form of passive protection against air raids which is to be in the least effective is to be established in the next few years, the rearmament programme will have to be modified. But the rearmament programme is not being modified. It is being expanded. The Prime Minister has told us that £1,500,000,000 will not be enough

A great many people have come to the conclusion that, if necessary, the Government must be compelled to curtail this expenditure in favour of passive defence. For a peace-loving country this seems the obvious line of action, but there is not the least likelihood of the Government accepting this point of view. The Home Secretary told the House of Commons in December that, "If air raid precautions were out of scale a huge financial burden would be placed upon the country and, what was far more serious, a dangerous bias would be created in the public mind in favour of passive protection rather than vigorous attack."

He is quite right. If we are to consider fighting a modern war at all we must concentrate on the bombs and the bombers. There has been a great deal of criticism of the A.R.P. proposals, but there has been little adequate criticism of the theory of A.R.P.

The theory is that if war breaks out we must have measures to protect the civilian population until the war is over. But the war will probably not be over until one side has won—until one side has smashed the other into subjection. Sir Samuel Hoare is sufficiently a realist to understand this unromantic fact, and he therefore concentrates on the smashing process. He does not, however, seem to take all the facts into consideration. It must be realised that there is an A.R.P. race in Europe at present as well as a rearmament race, and in this A.R.P. race other countries are well ahead; many have, in addition, great advantages of geographical situation, extent and distribution of population. And yet, if I understand Sir Samuel Hoare aright, he hopes to build up an attacking force which would break through these superior precautions and win the war. This seems unlikely. But if by his reference to the dangerous bias he means that if our own A.R.P. are improved at the expense of the attacking force there will be no prospect of this country winning a war by the method of counter-attack and that the enemy forces will, therefore, have all the time they need to break through our slightly improved defences, I quite agree. Concentration on Air Raid Precautions, even efficient precautions, is a mistake. It might be possible to improve the chances of survival in any one given air raid, but it would merely help to ensure that we should be subjected to an unlimited number of air raids.

I hope these remarks will serve to indicate in outline the reason why many pacifists acknowledge themselves to be opposed to A.R.P. not only in practice but also on principle. I believe that there is no way out through A.R.P. I believe that there is no way out through rearmament. Our only chance is to abolish the bombing plane and turn our efforts to constructive work of conciliation, to endeavour to prevent rather than to "cure" war. Expenditure of the time, the money, the ability and the energy at present being devoted to war preparations would stand a good chance of averting the air raid and the elimination of the air raid is the only real Air Raid Precaution.

41 Gloucester Street, S.W.1. ROY WALKER (Assistant Group Organiser, Peace Pledge Union)

"FACT"

SIR,—In thanking you for "Critic's" very courteous note on our Air Raid Precautions number, may I correct a small error? The price of *Fact* is still 6*d*., though a few cloth bound copies are available at 1*s*. GEO. R. WHITE,

Fact, 19 Garrick Street, London, W.C.2. Manager.

TIMES ECONOMICS

Sir,—The *Times* makes the following belated contribution to the science of public finance:—

> There is no reason from the economic point of view why the extra taxation should have adverse repercussions on business activity. After all, the proceeds will be spent and the money will be kept in circulation.

The trouble in 1931 was that unemployment relief was hoarded by the recipients. G. L. SCHWARTZ

MR. WILLIAM HOFFMANN

With Stanley in Africa.

An Apology.

In our issue of the 9th April, 1938, under the heading *Believe It or Not*, we published a review of Mr. William Hoffmann's book *With Stanley in Africa*, in which our reviewer expressed considerable doubt concerning certain of the claims made by Mr. Hoffmann. Since the publication of the review our reviewer has satisfied himself that Mr. Hoffmann did accompany the Emin expedition. We therefore tender to Mr. Hoffmann, on behalf of the reviewer, ourselves and our printers, our sincere apologies for the doubts expressed in our review, and wish to make it clear to our readers that we accept without hesitation Mr. Hoffmann's participation with Stanley in Africa in the famous feat which is described in Mr. Hoffmann's book.

Miscellany

DEAD BODIES

EVERY year, in England and Wales, we have something over 500,000 dead bodies to dispose of. What to do with them is a problem which confronts most of us at some time or the other; and I expect that nearly everyone has occasionally wondered uncomfortably what will happen to his own body when life has left it. Even more uncomfortably, we are apt at times to be obsessed by an imaginary picture of the body of someone whom we hold dear lying dead before us. It is a worrying picture, our reaction to which varies according to our mental make-up, our experience (including our tradition), and our intellectual and spiritual beliefs. This emotional aspect of the problem seems to me the really important and interesting one. To it, I shall return later.

There are, however, other considerations, not without psychologic relevance, but more immediately earthly and material. Sir Arnold Wilson and Professor Hermann Levy have written an important book on *Burial Reform and Funeral Costs*, and the Oxford University Press has just published it as a handsome volume, at twelve-and-sixpence. A year or two ago, these authors produced a scholarly book on *Industrial Assurance*, and their present work may be regarded as one of its sequels. They have here set out to analyse the extravagant expenditure on funerals in all classes, especially the poorer; and they expose the ways in which popular ideas and traditions as to the disposal of the dead are exploited as a business by Industrial Insurance offices. Every year, premiums totalling something like £66,000,000 are collected in pence per week at the doors of cottages and workmen's tenements by the agents of wealthy companies, which promise in return to furnish sums of money for funeral expenses when some member of the family dies. In fact, approximately £33,000,000 a year is paid out to the insured. The other half of the premium receipts is accounted for by expenses of collection, by central office salaries, and by profits arising from the inability (through unemployment or other cause) of a large number of the insurees to keep up their weekly payments, with consequent forfeiture or part forfeiture of claim. Over eighty million paying policies, intended to meet expenses attendant upon the burial of a person whose life is insured, are in existence in this country to-day.

The funeral of a poor man or woman often costs from twenty to thirty pounds, and it is obviously in the financial interest of the insurance companies, and of the undertakers, to keep costs and extravagant standards at as high a level as possible. To quote the words of the then Registrar of Friendly Societies, Sir E. W. Braybrook, writing forty years ago: "It is a very common weakness of human nature to surround the disposal of a dead body with circumstances of pomp and expenditure which exceed anything the deceased enjoyed when living, and tax heavily the means of the survivors."

In her *I Lived in the Slums*, Mrs. Cecil Chesterton referred

to the costly and pompous funerals of the poor as "a gesture of homage, an expression of the simple and unshakable belief in that human dignity which, however submerged by dirt and demoralisation, cannot be destroyed. Encompassed by squalor of life, the poor send their dead to the grave in grandeur. . . . The trappings, the horses, the coaches and the wreaths have a special significance for the people in the mean streets and the cramped dwellings. Life denies most of them the smallest social recognition. Year after year they move in drab routine. And then comes death, with its levelling of caste and position, and all the poetry and the imagination of the poor flames up in the desire to give their friend and neighbour a send-off that in an outburst of pageantry will testify their affection and respect." "Poetry and imagination," are, in my opinion, inaccurate terms wherewith to describe the funeral psychology of the poor; Mrs. Chesterton's attitude to the business seems to me generous but sentimental. Anyway, the phenomenon is no new one. In the middle of the last century, Chadwick—one of our really great and effective reformers—wrote: "The desire to secure a 'respectful' interment of themselves and their relatives is, perhaps, the strongest and most diffused feeling among the labouring classes of the population. Subscription may be obtained from large classes of them for their burial when it can be obtained neither for their own relief in sickness, nor for education, nor for any other object." And, fifty years later, Charles Booth said: "To secure a 'respectful' funeral they will wellnigh starve."

Among the cultivated and the well-to-do, funerals are being conducted with increasing simplicity and consequent dignity. This tendency will grow, and the fashion will doubtless spread to the poorer sections of society; but the necessary expenses of burial or cremation should be a national charge—with no class distinctions. Immediately, the "Death and Burial" business of the industrial assurance companies should be taken over by the State; and, "funeral costs" should be included among the "benefits" of National Health Insurance.

Most important, efforts should be made to cultivate among our people a saner attitude to the phenomena of death and to the ugly absurdity of utilising the death of a friend or relative as giving opportunity for family advertisement and public display. "*Pompa mortis magis terret quam mors ipsa.* Groans and convulsions . . . friends weeping, and blacks, and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible."

"'Tis all one to lie in St. *Innocents* Church-yard, as in the Sands of *Aegypt*: Ready to be any thing, in the extasie of being ever, and as content with six foot as the Moles of *Adrianus*."

Sir Arnold Wilson and Professor Levy have collected much interesting material relative to the disposal of dead bodies at various periods and in various countries. In early Roman times, the dead were buried within the house. The burial "was characterised as a function of family life, closely related to the ground on which the family traditionally lived." When in later days the parish church was the centre of village life, to which all would repair as a matter of course on festivals and holidays, the churchyard was looked upon as a meeting place of the village. At first, bodies were often buried within the churches—later in the yards or gardens surrounding them. So long as small communities were the rule and great cities the exception, the custom was that "the dead should lie in the very midst of the living."

The idea of family unity and the rationalisation known as family pride still persist. Respectable convention demands that the living and the dead bodies of their relatives shall keep in neighbourly proximity to one another. There is a small country churchyard in which the bodies of some of my relatives are buried. The churchyard is now fully occupied; and the charming old rector, showing a friend of mine over his church, and incidentally showing the flowers in the churchyard, which he sensibly treats as an extension of his own adjoining garden, remarked on its repletion. He pointed to one small unoccupied patch which he said he had reserved for himself (he is now in the late seventies); and then, coming to the ground in which the bodies of members of my family lie buried, he measured with his walking stick and said, "I believe we could just manage to squeeze Dr. Harry (myself) in here, if he didn't mind part of him lying outside consecrated ground." What sort of appearance I should present when the last trump sounded is a subject for the speculations of mediaeval schoolmen.

The ancient Mousterians were wont to furnish the dead bodies of their kin with flint implements of the chase, whilst the early Persians buried with their distinguished leaders not only chariots but also slaughtered horses, cattle, slaves and even wives, on the assumption that these objects would in some way be revivified together with the body of the dead hero, whose pursuits and pleasures would, among the shades, take the same form as they did on earth. Many of us, even to-day, seem to have, deep in our subconsciousness, relics of these ancient beliefs. Otherwise, why these continued attentions to the grave; why these flowers and marble monuments?

The best and most decent thing we can do with the dead body of a friend, or request to be done with our own body when we no longer occupy it, is to secure its speediest reduction to the dust from which it came. Cremation is, as Sir Arnold Wilson and Professor Levy agree, the most wholesome, hygienic and aesthetically tolerable method of disposing of dead bodies at present available. In so far as we associate in our thoughts a dead body with a person whose memory we hold dear, the picture of rotting flesh and of slow decomposition can but be distressing and horrible.

When, in 1874, Sir Charles Dilke's wife was cremated in Dresden—the process being then illegal in this country—"a widespread expression of shocked public opinion arose." But, in that same year, at the instigation of Sir Henry Thompson, the surgeon, a society was formed for the purpose of advocating this method of disposal of the dead. Since then, progress has been continuous though slow. So recently as 1935, the number of cremations in this country was only 9,614 for the year, or 1.6 per cent. of the number of deaths. In Germany, the authors tell us, the proportion is about 10 per cent.; "but the number of crematoria in the Reich to-day is 110 as against 29 in Great Britain."

Most of our sentiment about dead bodies is part of our social heritage, taught us not by first-hand experience but by conscious and subconscious influencing or conditioning during the early years of our life. The application of our intellect to our spontaneous emotional reactions would, I am sure, have led to a very different result. What, then, is a rational human attitude to dead bodies—our own, those of our friends, or the bodies of our unknown fellow human beings? It is impossible to dogmatise about this, so soaked are we in superstition and second-hand sentiment and sentimentality. I can but say what my own reason leads me to think, and increasingly to "feel," as the influence of my early education and of herd sentiment gets more and more attenuated and my mind clarifies with age. I have never, when face to face with a dead body, thought or felt that I was looking at a person, a human being. A dead body, whether of one we love or of a stranger, seems to me but a discarded suit of clothes, in no essential different from any other piece of inanimate matter. Once it was the temple of a living consciousness; it is now but a deserted shell, the sloughed skin of a creature that no longer has use for it. That it once served as an instrument of communication between us and someone we loved—like some old ear-trumpet or pair of spectacles—might entitle it to a place in our cabinet of reliques, were it not for the fact that it rapidly loses even that small reminiscent value; and daily becomes less like the body we knew when alive. Our bodies, Jeremy Taylor tells us, "shall all be turned into dust, by what way soever you or your chance shall dress them. It is all one in the final event of things. Saint Ignatius who was buried in the bodies of lions, and Saint Polycarp, who was burned to ashes, shall have their bones and flesh again and with greater comfort than those violent persons who slept among kings."

HARRY ROBERTS

COUNTRY NOTES

Small but Vigorous

CERTAIN small animals seem to have been created with a fury of energy enough to do credit to any dictator. On another plane of life they might have accomplished anything. Luckily for humanity, they are limited by their size to relatively harmless activities. One of them, indeed, the common shrew, which may be heard squeaking either with excitement or temper in the long grasses, is one of the smallest mammals in existence, but his minute framework in no way limits the ardour with which he sets about his business. This business is usually concerned with the obtaining of food, for the shrew is one of those unfortunate creatures who must eat continuously and enormously. It is not so much that he is greedy, as that if he neglects his appetite he simply dies. No wonder that he is in so desperate a hurry when he knows that his last meal must be followed by another one within the hour, and that his long nose must lose no time in smelling it out. Even at night he cannot rest, for he cannot stoke himself up for the hours of darkness with a particularly large and late dinner: he is so constituted that he must eat often. Six times his own weight in food will see him safely round the clock, but any deprivation or delay will soon reduce him to a pathetic little corpse. If you have the time and inclination to spend most of the day hunting for worms and insects, you may keep a tame shrew and impress your friends by the readiness with which he will snatch food from your hand, but be under no delusion: this is not because he loves or trusts you, it is merely his extreme urgency leaving no room for fear.

Another hearty eater who is afflicted with a similarly precipitate temperament is that bane of gardeners, the mole. Larger and heavier than the shrew, he still demands at least the equivalent of his own weight in food each day. But consider the exercise he takes, and the violence he displays in taking it. It is enough to make anybody hungry. Semi-blind as he is, we might expect him to go about his work half-heartedly and like a sluggard, but on the contrary he rushes at it as though a troop of devils were after him. Digging furiously, his track may often be watched rising in weals and mounds across the newly-raked seed-bed, tracing his progress underground. Physically the little miner is beautifully adapted for his curious mode of life; his front paws are amazingly strong and provided with sharp claws and an extra bone; his ears non-existent though his whole body is, one might say, an ear; his eyes so deeply buried in his fur that they can come to no harm while he tunnels; his fur so disposed that there is no "wrong way" in which it can be brushed up, a very useful asset when its owner may have to retire backwards along a narrow passage. His teeth are sharp and numerous, as you will learn if you attempt to pick him up; his nose pointed and well designed for use as a kind of trowel; in fact the only weak point in his whole equipment lies in the fact that he dies immediately from a rap on that useful snout.

A Model of Paternity

When I was a child I used to collect sticklebacks at this time of year and keep them in one of those square glass tanks mysteriously associated with electric light plants, first putting a few inches of sand at the bottom and some waving pond-weeds. The stickleback is an ornamental little fish, although he comes from nowhere more exotic than our native brooks and ponds: he flashes red, green and blue as he darts in the water, bristling with the curious thorn-like weapons that give him his name and enable him to vent his rage upon other males of his species. For the stickleback, like the shrew and the mole, is small, energetic and quarrelsome. His habits are even more interesting than his appearance. He is a born father, packed with paternal love in the whole length of his three inches. His mate, in fact, is allowed no part whatsoever in the care of the offspring, beyond the sole function which he himself cannot perform.

It is he who prepares the nest, first rolling himself in the mud in the bottom of his pond or stream to scoop a suitable hollow. In this hollow he carefully builds the foundations of his nursery, which, when finished, is something like a woman's muff, as round, as neat and as cosy, but only one inch long and with only one entrance instead of two. He has carried a lot of leaves and stringy matter to make it, and has stuck the whole thing together with a sort of liquid glue that he personally exudes, extremely busy, painstaking, and anxious. Here, however, his single-handed preparations break down. He cannot lay eggs. For this menial purpose the services of a lady have to be engaged, or perhaps we should say that the lady has to be coerced, since she shows no enthusiasm for the task but has to be fetched and piloted and even steered into the entrance. Even then she does not lay enough eggs, but has to be given two or more successors. The stickleback takes no further interest in his helpers once they have done what he wanted. They are allowed to swim away and pursue their irresponsible life in the pleasant shallows. He, pre-occupied, fusses round his nest, keeps a careful watch on his eggs, stirs the water softly with his fins to produce a current, and fights off any possible invader. No trouble is too great for this little model father. V. SACKVILLE-WEST

THE MOVIES

"Inside Nazi Germany, 1938": The March of Time, 3rd Year, No. 12

THIS is the March of Time bulletin which has created such a sensation in America, where it has been hailed by over 90 per cent. of its critics as unbiased reporting, and attacked as anti-Nazi by 2 per cent., and by 1.5 per cent. as pro-Nazi. The German Vice-Consul protested against its exhibition in New York, but there are not many sequences or phrases which would have to be altered if it were shown in Berlin. No doubt liberal overtones in the commentary will be audible to the intelligent ear; but to the devout Nazi it must appear little more than a brief précis of those doctrines which have been expounded and amplified a thousand times in the orations of Dr. Goebbels. It is a perfectly straightforward and exceedingly efficient picture of the regimentation of a great people into one huge soulless unit with a single objective —expansion. We are shown no horrors from the *Brown Book*: no concentration camps, no party jobbery, no prisoners shot trying to escape, no Jew-baiting atrocities. But we do begin to understand the everyday atmosphere in which atrocities are not only possible but flourish unheeded: we see anti-Jewish notices outside remote country towns, a group of children studying *Der Stürmer* at the street corner, the special yellow benches on which Jews may sit in the park. We see children scarcely out of the kindergarten preparing to take their place as units in the Nazi machine, to do and think precisely as they are told, to regard Death for the Fatherland as the supreme felicity and the last honour. In point of fact, we see nothing that will be at all unfamiliar to the educated Englishman who reads the *Times*. But the March of Time, which is now shown in twelve hundred cinemas in these islands, reaches an enormous public which never reads a serious paper and for whom the only facts are the facts they can see. That it will make a deep impression on this public I do not doubt; even the educated may well be unnerved by the visible confirmation of what they have long known. Of its actual effect on public opinion I am not so sure. Many people, fearing above all that we cannot expect to defeat a nation of ants without ourselves becoming ants, will be driven deeper than before into shoulder-shrugging isolationism; the majority, I suppose, will fumble a little more cheerfully for that extra sixpence, enrol with increased enthusiasm in Territorials, auxiliary fire brigades, A.R.P. Since that is what the Government want us to do, it is not so surprising that the Censor should have made up his mind to pass this film. The March of

Time has lifted the top from the anthill, and exposed to the nation's gaze the infernal behaviour of its black inhabitants. Forget about the lilies, we shall be told; forget about slum clearance, education, free milk; consider the ants, how tirelessly they toil, how unceasingly they lay up their shells, their bombers, and their machine guns. Go thou and do likewise.

PETER GALWAY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"As Husbands Go," at the Garrick

As Husbands Go is a slow-motion little farce in which too much is said and not nearly enough happens. Really, it is hardly a farce at all: it lacks bumptiousness and the situations are poor. Made over—which would mean a mountain of work—it could be a plausible comedy: character plays a part in what fun there is, and there is a touch of reason behind the dialogue. Mr. Baines, a wealthy business man (Mr. Hugh Wakefield) has deserted his Hampstead mansion for a new home in the seclusion of Parsons Green, where he spends delectable evenings with Almira, an ex-Mrs. Venables (Miss Jeanne de Casalis). His most urgent motive in leaving Hampstead for an unknown address had been to escape from his young wife, Daphne, who snored, slapped him on the back and insisted on serving him tasteless fancy food. At Parsons Green, a superb cook and a discreet butler make it possible for Mr. Baines and Almira to enjoy the pleasures of love and *gourmandise*. Everything has been running with a suspicious smoothness when Lionel Venables, just down from Oxford, breaks into the nest to reclaim his erring mother. The same evening, Mr. Baines learns that Daphne is on his tracks. Almira, weary of living at Baron's Court with Lionel, turns the situation to good advantage: she moves in to the Parsons Green house in order to defend Mr. Baines from Daphne. Circumstances give her the upper hand: quite soon, she is redecorating the drawing-room. But unhappily, this resumption of married routine (though with Almira in place of Daphne), this conversion of the love nest into the well-run home, brings out a new streak of wildness in Mr. Baines, who, under the influence of the Keep-fit Lionel, begins to spend his evenings at a gymnasium, from which he returns late, to regard Almira with a healthy apathy. Almira, not to be outdone, introduces Daphne (whom she has meanwhile cultivated) into the Parsons Green *ménage*, and from this domestic horror Mr. Baines flies. Daphne makes up in noise for what she lacks in sex appeal: depressed by her failure to find love with a too respectable boxer she smokes cigars, slaps everyone on the back, screams and stumbles about the place in a 1920-ish tulle dress painfully stitched with sequins. This awful girl is pleasingly rendered by Miss Vera Lennox. Mr. Maurice Harvey plays the butler: what is he doing in such a hollow part? This is decidedly Miss Jeanne de Casalis' evening. She galvanises the rather weak fun. Her vitality, her "edge," her repose and her cynicism appear to admiration in the part of Almira. Not a line sounds flat when she speaks it. Her entrances cheer up Mr. Hugh Wakefield who, for the greater part of the first act, makes rather heavy weather of Mr. Baines. The sets are poor: much might have been done with them. Is Almira's drawing-room meant to be funny or not? Humour, or at least satire, in every detail could be an integral part of the *mise-en-scene* of any farce: even a vase can grin. There should be, at least, a comic-postcard boldness, with the unreal fun heightened by hectic lighting. As it is, too many English farces are like timid theatricals in a hotel lounge. For the pleasure of seeing Miss de Casalis and Mr. Wakefield, most of the evening was a heavy price to pay.

"April Clouds," at the Royalty

This domestic comedy has been written by Peggy Barwell and Miles Malleson, and is "based on an idea by Edith Jacobi." The writing is most dexterous, the "idea" is pitifully slight. A married woman falls in love; her adolescent son and daughter spy upon her; in her resentment she behaves increasingly badly to them; her beau gets off with the French governess; and the curtain falls on a family reconciliation. That we contrive not to be bored by so tenuous a yarn is a proof of the authors' skill. The style is *scuola di* Dodie Smith, the setting a dentist's maisonette. The mother's behaviour to her children is odious beyond all credibility, the spying of the children is vulgar beyond all condonation. Implicitly the play is a gloomy indictment of bourgeois life, but superficially it is as cosy as Ovaltine or Horlick's. The authors have caught very skilfully the language appropriate to the setting, and the acting throughout is uncommonly good. Miss Sydney Fairbrother brings her vast accomplishment to the part of an old servant, Mr. Nigel Stock, Mr. Alan Grove, Miss Peggy Bryan and Miss Muriel Pavlow play the young people with great skill and feeling; Mr. Frank Pettingell is delicate in the role of a kindhearted dentist, Miss Catharine Lacy is effective as his wife, and the smaller parts are all well polished. If only this play were *about* something, it would deserve success.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, April 29th—
Literary and Musical Evening in aid of Spanish Women and Children Refugees, Friends House, 8.

SATURDAY, April 30th—
Performance, including "Busmen," arranged by Unity Theatre in aid of China, Phoenix Theatre, 6 and 8.30. Tickets 2s. to 10s. 6d.

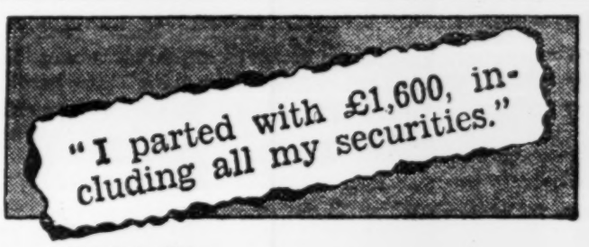
SUNDAY, May 1st—
May Day Service for Socialist Christians, St. George's, Bloomsbury, 11. Preacher: The Dean of Canterbury.
Prof. F. Aveling on "Philosophy and Science," Conway Hall, 11.
Chamber Music Concert, 6.30.
Prof. J. C. Flugel on "'Right' and 'Left' as Political and Social Patterns," 153 Finchley Road, 6.15.
"High Fever," Arts.

MONDAY, May 2nd—
Opening of Summer Show, Royal Academy.
Opening of International Opera Season, Covent Garden.

TUESDAY, May 3rd—
Opening of Empire Exhibition, Glasgow.
Prof. D. Nichol Smith on "The Study of English Literature," Birkbeck College, 5.30. And on May 10th and 17th.
Karl Polanyi on "Perilous Europe," first of six lectures, Morley College, 8.
"You Never Can Tell," Westminster.

FRIDAY, May 6th—
Embassies of Reconciliation Public Meeting. Subject: "Peace Through Economic Reconstruction," Friends House, 7.30.
Recognition of Abyssinia Protest Meeting, Central Hall, 8.
Dance in aid of Cecile Booysen Clinic, New Burlington Galleries, 9.

SATURDAY, May 7th—
National Council for Civil Liberties Week-end Conference, Old Jordans Hostel, nr. Beaconsfield. Apply 320 Regent Street, W.1.



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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE Nonesuch Press may be congratulated on their fine edition of The Writings of Gilbert White of Selborne (2 vols. limited to 850 sets at £3 10s.), edited by H. J. Massingham and illustrated by Eric Ravilious. Like almost all of Mr. Meynell's books, it is a delight to read and to handle: the actual page and printing could scarcely be bettered. Mr. Massingham has done the most important part of his work as well as Mr. Meynell has done his: that is to say he has chosen what to put in, and what to leave out, most wisely. This edition contains, besides *The Natural History of Selborne* in full, those six years of White's *Naturalist's Journal*, which were written after the publication of his Natural History and which were therefore not made use of by him in writing it. *The Naturalist's Journal* has only been printed once, in 1931, and as a separate book. Mr. Massingham also includes The Antiquities of Selborne, except for the Latin charters, and a selection of White's Private Letters. There are two useful maps, one contemporary, the other from a tithe award fifty years after White's death, which shows very few changes in the fields round Selborne. Thus the two things which matter most—the text and the printing—of the books are admirable. Mr. Ravilious's woodcuts are half-way between being illustrations and decorations. Gilbert White's first virtue, without which all his greatness would crumble into dust, is his meticulous accuracy. An illustrator should show respect to the spirit of his author. In letter 28, White gives the description with measurements of a two-year-old female moose belonging to the Duke of Richmond which was hanging up in a summer house in a rather putrefying state. He concludes with the words:

> What a vast tall beast must a full-grown stag be. . . . In the house they showed me the horn of a male moose.

Mr. Ravilious, who has apparently never looked even at a picture of a cow moose, has drawn an exquisitely precise little woodcut of a bull moose with a vast spread of antler hanging up in a summer house. This sort of vagueness seems somehow insulting, not to the reader, but to everything that White cared about and which made him great.

* * *

Mr. Massingham loves White and exalts his greatness, though doing so involves him occasionally in being unfair to others. It would be absurd to charge him with ever showing anything but veneration for his author. But a certain vagueness permeates his notes. I shall quote a number of them to show what I mean.

> June 9th. Mazagon beans come in. *Note.—A variety of the wild bean cultivated in Morocco.*

A wild bean might be almost anything. Mazagon beans are actually the first early small broad bean, now superseded by larger sorts but still procurable from Carter's.

> July 14th. Jenneting apples came in to be eaten. *Note.—A variety no longer grown.*

Actually the June-eating apple is not uncommon and under the name Red Joaneting it is listed by Messrs. Bunyard.

> Where metheglin was making. . . . *Note.—The rural version up to comparatively recent times (before the Machine Age destroyed all the local industries) of the Samead, mead of the Saxons. It used to be made in a farmhouse not far from Poole Harbour up to the time of the war.*

Metheglin is to mead as small beer to four X. It is made by some small farmers within two hundred yards of where I am writing this review, and I have reason to think many bee-keepers make mead. These are tiny trifles, but the effect is cumulative and destroys one's confidence in the editor, and one needs implicit faith in a man who tells one that he "hit upon an authentic example" of a marsh warbler's recognising a cuckoo's egg and piercing it with its bill. In letter 31 to Pennant, White commented on a statement by Scopoli that the woodcock "pullos rostro portat fugiens ab hoste," writing:

> candour forbids me to say absolutely that any fact is false because I have not been a witness to such a fact. I have only to remark that the long unwieldy bill of the woodcock is perhaps the worst adapted of any among winged creatures for such a feat of natural affection. *Note.—Scopoli was right. In case of danger, the mother bird does carry her young either between the thighs or by the feet. Ornithologists bandy arguments as to which method is adopted. Coward sensibly suggested both methods. When birds are regarded once more as living beings, instead of biological automata, as they are now, it will be granted that members of the same species can and do perform the same act in different ways. But that day is not yet. The serene open-mindedness of the author is very noticeable in this passage, a jewel on the forehead of science, which it is only too ready to barter for dogma. But he cherished it always.*

A great deal might be said about this absurd note, but perhaps comment is unnecessary.

* * *

Gilbert White was himself admirably scientific: he believed in the value of exact observations, upon which he was prepared, like the ornithologists of to-day, to dismiss erroneous ideas and to adopt new ones even if they seemed very strange. He was never satisfied with arguing the merits of a case *in vacuo*, but tested every statement when he could do so. Nothing could illustrate his quality as a scientist better than letter 30 to Barrington, in which he examines the statement of Monsieur Herrissant that a cuckoo was anatomically incapable of incubating its eggs because its crop was situated below the sternum. White at once dissected a cuckoo, and found the crop situated as stated, but so had the nightjar and a hawk which he dissected immediately afterwards for purposes of comparison, and the Frenchman's theory was exploded. White was, as Mr. Massingham and Mr. Nicholson have each pointed out, quite right to be chary of dismissing the contemporary scientific belief that swallows hibernated, like bats, instead of migrating. His opinions veered from one view to the other accordingly as he watched bands of swallows setting out from the South Downs over the sea, or as he noticed a late straggler, flying round on a warm evening. He deliberately compares such reappearances with the bats who are tempted out by mild weather after they have begun hibernation. After watching them roost in the reeds beside the river he even entertained the opinion that they spent the winter under water, as was most dogmatically asserted by some. It is peculiar to find him worrying himself with such ideas when he is cheerfully recording the arrivals and departures of other migrants. Gilbert White had many characteristics in common with Evelyn, but had a far more original and questioning approach to the world in which he lived. There have always been—there are at this moment—thousands of country people whose chief interest is in watching every detail of the continually changing natural scene. They delight to know all the birds by their songs, where to find the earliest of each of the wild flowers, the first of each kind of tree to come in leaf. They watch birds, measure rain gauges, excavate kilns of mediaeval pottery. Gilbert White, less eccentric than Sir Thomas Browne, was the type and exemplar of all these, raised above them by a hand's breadth. This little extra is revealed in his unflagging interest, his patience, but above all by the clear, logical and scientific mind which was expressed by a lucid but powerfully energetic style. It is a mistake, I think, to insist too strongly on his extreme attachment to Selborne, for he was exactly the same when he stayed at Ringmer. Had he sailed with Cook in 1769, he might not only have been one of the numerous band of eighteenth-century naturalists who anticipated Darwin, but have actually performed Darwin's great work. Apart from his importance as an ornithologist White gives us the most detailed and also the most idyllic record of the life of an English village community at the end of the eighteenth century. Mr. Massingham must be forgiven for the exaggeration of many of his notes, which is a measure of his love of the old village crafts and ways and his regret at their disappearance. And he earns our gratitude by including all the notes that Coleridge wrote into his copy.

DAVID GARNETT

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MAY CONTENTS

Amongst the photogravure plates in this number are reproductions of a new portrait of Mr. John Christie (the patron of Glyndebourne), a new drawing of James Stephens (by Mervyn Peake) and a Tonks drawing showing Mr. D. S. MacColl as Don Quixote, recently presented to the British Museum, and not before reproduced.

"A Producer to a Playwright"

A long, personal letter written to Mr. Somerset Maugham by the famous German manager and producer, Dr. Robert Klein. Dr. Klein lets us into many of the secrets of his technique in explaining how he treated, or even improved, the plays of Maugham, Shaw and others when he was preparing them for German audiences. Not all dramatists will agree with Dr. Klein's provocative and amusing article.

"A Last Word on the Hugh Lane Affair"

By D. S. MacColl

In this article Mr. MacColl makes a concession of real importance. As a Trustee of the National Gallery he has always supported the moral as well as the legal right of the Tate Gallery to the collection of pictures bequeathed by Hugh Lane, in spite of the signed but unwitnessed codicil bequeathing them to Dublin. Mr. MacColl dissects the character of Hugh Lane, exposes the inaccuracies of A. E. and W. B. Yeats, but relents, and now is willing to give the Lane collection as a free gift to Ireland.

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THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

Journals and Letters of Reginald, Viscount Esher. Vol. III, 1910–1915. Edited by OLIVER, VISCOUNT ESHER. *Nicholson and Watson.* 25s.

> Nearly all my life I have been independent in the sense that I have been free to say what I please, and to be the sole judge of the propriety of what I do in the interests of my country. . . . It is for that reason that I have cut myself off from the advantages (and perhaps some of the drawbacks) of "office" in the ordinary sense of the word.

Not "perhaps," but certainly, from many of the drawbacks. Moving quietly between Mr. Asquith's library in Downing Street and Mr. Balfour's dining-room in Carlton House Terrace, writing letters to the *Times* and magazine articles under assumed names, responsible for many decisions and answerable to no public criticism, continually whispering in the ears of the Monarch, the late Lord Esher, it must be admitted, cuts a disquieting figure. "I am the last imaginable person to approve of 'democracy,' which I frankly detest." The two volumes already published of his Journals and Letters are of the highest interest, and the new instalment is equally absorbing. It begins with the accession of George V and ends in December, 1915.

Lord Esher had been one of King Edward's most trusted advisers. He places himself with Lord Knollys and the Marquis de Soveral among the four who will never get over their loss. But rapidly he becomes equally indispensable to the new Monarch. He comments, and with approval, on the changed ways of the Court. Victorian days are back, the Queen knits of an evening, the French governess sits on the King's right hand at dinner, there is not a card in the house.

Lord Esher was a cultivated gentleman, presumably no more interested in stamp-collecting than in gambling, and it is a testimony to his extraordinary art in personal relations that he commanded the friendship of two men so dissimilar both from one another and from himself as King Edward and King George. He has, of course, a romantic sentiment about Royalty which, if one has not lived in Court circles, one finds a little difficult to understand. He is often impressed by the "simplicity" and "naturalness" of royal persons, and he is not surprised, as the more ingenuous of us might be, by the Queen's "intense pleasure that the King should have himself given her the Star of India."

> We discussed the chances of this before she left. And when the King first considered it, he was opposed to the idea. In the end, he came round and she was much pleased. There was a regular little installation. He decorated her, and she kissed his hand.

Then occasionally he recovers himself. "Is it not strange that these baubles should exist and interest us, when we think at other moments of the solar system and the insoluble problems of life and death?"

The book is full of interesting sidelights on prominent persons: the King burns the letters of Georgiana Devonshire to George IV—"They begin 'my dearest brother' with the stupid intention (bred in the mind of a beautiful goose) of concealing their authorship": Mr. Lloyd George is horrified at the idea of Prince Louis of Battenberg, a German, becoming First Lord, and Mr. Asquith characteristically remarks that L. G. is an excellent foolometer and that the public would take the same view. Haldane says that it is very difficult to get the Prime Minister to make any preparations in advance of a difficulty; that the bent of Mr. Asquith's mind is towards a solution *ad hoc*; and that he is always inclined to optimistic views in face of a complicated situation (a good instance of the temperamental difference between the empiricist in politics and the metaphysician). Mr. Churchill (in 1912) "brilliant as he is, does not listen to the opposite side, and is impatient of opinions that do not coincide with his own. This is a fatal defect in a civilian minister who has to consider the initial moves in a great war." The strong, silent Kitchener (George V complains) has only one fault: he is so voluble that the King can never get a word in edgeways. Mr. Balfour writes an anonymous puff of Norman Angell's *Great Illusion*; the Archbishop of York (the present Archbishop of Canterbury) goes out stalking, how successfully we are not told; Haldane goes up in an airship sitting on a rail with only stanchions to hold on to, though he can't go within ten feet of a precipice. "But he thought of Goethe going up the tower of Strassburg Cathedral, and defeated his vertigo."

In the second half of the book, when war has broken out, the details of personal differences cease to be merely entertaining. Already we have seen the clouds collecting. Esher records a conversation with the Prime Minister in October, 1911:

> I reminded him that the mere fact of the War Office plan having been worked out in detail with the French General Staff (which is the case) has certainly committed us to fight, whether the Cabinet likes it or not. It is certainly an extraordinary thing that our officers should have been permitted to arrange all the details, trains, landing, concentration, etc., when the Cabinet have never been consulted.

Now we are shown the tactlessness of Kitchener, the uncommunicativeness of Joffre, the touchiness of French, resulting in the suffering and death of multitudes. Lord Esher, who sees the good points of each of them, rushes to and fro, pouring oil upon the waters, writing flattering letters to be sent from one military gentleman to another, but his efforts are vain—Sir John will never understand Lord K.; and Lord K. makes no allowances. Joffre, too, complains of Sir John, and Lord K. has not a high opinion of Joffre. The politicians seem to be better, a little.

> Twenty very able gentlemen in England, and about an equal quantity in France of similar age and habits, are trying to do something which long life, sedentary occupations, leisurely habits of mind render ludicrously impossible. I was educated, brought up and have lived my life among these people. I know them. And I say that hardly one of them, except possibly in sobriety of temper and judgment, can be compared to what he was twenty years ago.

Lord Esher, therefore, pins his faith to Russia, which enjoys the advantages of autocracy. And even when this bubble has been pricked, he is frightened above all of what he calls "a bad peace," which means a peace that has been negotiated and not dictated. This section of the book is not calculated to encourage anyone to trust again in what is called the arbitrament of war—that is to surrender our prospects to the jealousy, shortsightedness, ambition and mere human fallibility of politicians and soldiers.

Probably the most important pages of the book are those concerning the constitutional problems raised in connection with the Parliament Bill and the Home Rule Bill. Lord Esher, at the King's invitation, submitted several memoranda which are models of clear statement. His personal opinions were too moderate to please either political party. He considered the 1909 Budget

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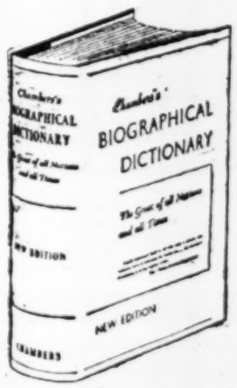

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bad, but thought its rejection by the Lords a constitutional error. He disliked the Parliament Bill, and, surprisingly, considered it unnecessary, but preferred it to any of the alternatives suggested for the Reform of the House of Lords, and was vehemently in favour of the Lords accepting it. The King held similar views :

> His Majesty is most grateful to all those who saved him and the country from looking ridiculous in the eyes of all foreign nations, who, by the way, understand so little of our institutions. I don't think the King will ever forget the little band of wise patriots who put their dislike of the Bill aside, and voted for the lesser of two evils.

Esher's contempt for the Tory leaders, apart from Balfour and Lansdowne, was unmeasured :

> I shall never move a finger or urge a vote or give one for the purpose of displacing Asquith and handing over the country to any of these people. . . . As far as I am concerned the course is clear—and it is better by far to keep in office these people, who at least are capable, in spite of Home Rule, Manhood Suffrage and all the rest, than to displace them.

He thought the Government had no right to demand from the King a promise to make Peers *in hypothetical circumstances* (i.e., before the election, and before the rejection of the Bill), but he held that the King acted rightly in giving this promise. "Queen Victoria could not have done better, and would, I believe, not have done otherwise." Two years after the passing of the Parliament Act, when the Home Rule Bill provoked another crisis, there were Tories—Sir William Anson, with all the weight of his authority, among them—who wished the King to employ his veto. Lord Esher submitted another memorandum :

> The King can do no wrong. This cannot be said of anyone who is a free agent. Within certain limits, and under certain circumstances, the King ceases, constitutionally, to be a free agent. . . .
>
> Has the King then, no prerogatives? Yes, he has many, but when translated into action they must be exercised on the advice of a Minister responsible to Parliament. In no case can the Sovereign take political action unless he is screened by a Minister who has to answer to Parliament. This proposition is fundamental, and differentiates a Constitutional Monarchy based upon the principles of 1688 from all other forms of government . . . .
>
> In the last resort the King has no option. If the constitutional doctrines of ministerial responsibility mean anything at all, the King would have to sign his own death-warrant, if it was presented to him for signature by a Minister commanding a majority in Parliament. If there is any tampering with this fundamental principle, the end of the monarchy is in sight.

This coincided very closely with Mr. Asquith's opinion, and the Whig doctrine could not be better stated. But the King remained uncertain, even when Lord Esher, in this matter perhaps *plus royaliste que le roi*, said that it was far better that there should be fighting in Ireland than that the Monarchy should be involved in the quarrel (as it was bound to be, if the King intervened to prevent the Home Rule Bill becoming law). Then Esher himself began to hesitate. He saw that Ulster was in fact determined to resist with effective violence :

> It is like some final mêlée in a tournament of old. The moment is bound to come, if no compromise is effected, when the mass of the King's subjects will expect him to throw down his truncheon and say, "Hold."

While continuing to maintain that the Royal Veto was obsolete, he held that the King possessed the power of dismissing his Ministers, but not of dictating policy, whether in the form of a dissolution of Parliament or otherwise. This is obscure, for what effect could result from dismissing the Cabinet except to force a dissolution? (William IV was the last Monarch to dismiss a Cabinet commanding the support of the Commons.) Undoubtedly it was imperative to avoid a civil war, and the country wished for a compromise, but how the Monarch could have used his power to enforce this remains problematic. It took the outbreak of war to solve the crisis.

The British Constitution is so undetermined and in such constant evolution that at no moment can the frontier be defined between constitutional and unconstitutional acts. Conduct that was customary for George III would be universally condemned in George VI, although there has been in the interval no legislation seriously affecting the Royal power. Edward VII interfered in public affairs immeasurably less than Queen Victoria, George V than Edward VII. To each Monarch fewer papers have been submitted for other than formal approval. For this invisibly performed and necessary modification, the chief agents have probably been men like Knollys, Stamfordham, Ponsonby, and Esher. Democrats, reading these volumes by Lord Esher, will be frequently amused and occasionally exasperated by the aristocratic assumptions of the writer. But the evidence suggests that he used his great private influence with uncommon good sense, moderation and realism.

This third volume has been well edited by the present Lord Esher; inevitably one is left wondering what even more remarkable passages the editor has rightly felt obliged to omit, but the book as it stands is in the highest degree interesting and informative.

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Homage to Catalonia. By GEORGE ORWELL. *Secker and Warburg.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Inside Spain. By GEOFFREY BRERETON. *Quality Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

There are many strong arguments for keeping creative writers out of politics and Mr. George Orwell is one of them. If these beings toe the party line they are likely to be ruined as writers; if they preserve their independence—and, after all, they have by nature little choice about that—they become an annoyance to the causes they espouse. There are admitted exceptions. Ludwig Renn must be one. But for him there can be nothing strange in the militarised politics of our ideological war; he has been drilling all his life and he has found a peculiar if limited stability and humanity of his own in the fields of obedience.

Not so Mr. Orwell of the liberal tradition. He is the typical English anarchist. Man of action first and politician later by exasperation and disgust, he went out to Spain at the beginning of the civil war, joined the P.O.U.M. militia and left revolutionary Barcelona to stand and shiver in the trenches of Aragon. There he breathed the sour, stale smell of war, collected firewood, brooded over rifles thirty years old, wondered where the ammunition was and where the artillery and the war were too. On the Fascist side there must have been similar questionings. Unexploded shells were carefully collected, reconditioned and fired back: "There was said to be one shell with a nickname of its own which travelled to and fro daily without exploding." But some did burst, there were trench raids and snipings—a

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sniper got Mr. Orwell in the neck later on—and meanwhile the P.O.U.M. pursued its eternal political theme.

Win the war first, as the Communists said; or revolution and war hand-in-hand? Mr. Orwell listened and had no patience with the P.O.U.M. view. He told these eager children (they were hardly youths) that they were talking through their hats, and when he got to Barcelona he planned to join the Communist-controlled International Brigade. P.O.U.M. smiled. They did not hunt heretics. But the worker's hey-day had passed in Barcelona when Mr. Orwell got there; bourgeois democracy had come back with too much accent on the bourgeois for Mr. Orwell's zeal, and he ran into the Anarchist rising. Already P.O.U.M. was under suspicion. The time of lies was following with depressing inevitability upon the revolutionary dawn, and Mr. Orwell, rather than take sides against former comrades, became sentimentally pro-P.O.U.M. and preferred to return to the front and fight the enemy. But for this eccentricity of Mr. Orwell's a Fascist sniper would not have caught him in the neck one morning while he was in the middle of a quiet, interesting conversation.

After this Mr. Orwell's book becomes an account of the bloody suppression of P.O.U.M., and, being constitutionally "again the government," he undertakes P.O.U.M.'s defence. There seems to be no doubt that the wretched P.O.U.M. got a raw deal. But though he writes with honest indignation about the lies that were spread about men who were fighting the common enemy and has the idealist's attractive and understandable loathing for the grey arguments of expediency, Mr. Orwell is, I am afraid, wrong-headed when he carries the defence into the field of high politics and strategy. Without going into the matter at length, it was surely clear from the very moment of foreign intervention—which was at the beginning of the war—that the Spaniards had tragically but undoubtedly missed the revolutionary tide. Mr. Orwell disagrees. Yet what grounds are there for believing that the democratic moderate line was unrealistic and even strategically unsound? Is there any reason to believe that a revolutionary policy would have awakened the vehement support of the working classes outside of Spain, say that of the ultra-respectable English Labour party? (Isn't this the thin end of the Trotskyite heresy against which Mr. Orwell defends the P.O.U.M.?) Is it credible that without the "tainted" Russian arms, there would have been any Government Spain left to which revolutionaries behind Franco's lines could rally? And once Franco had collared the Moors first for a Holy War, what hope was there of a Moroccan rising, all questions of French feeling apart? Given the situation, I see no reason to believe in any of these possibilities. Mr. Orwell is kicking against the pricks—an impulse which is attractive because he is human, honest and lively in a drilled and unlikeable world, but which is nevertheless perverse.

Still the dilemma of a man who sees the ideal become the equivocal is a genuine one. He puts it with verve, freedom and tolerance. And his descriptions of the men he fought with, the acts of strange and monotonous days, the muddled skirmishes and things like the sensations he had when he was wounded are extremely well done. No one excels him in bringing to the eyes, ears and nostrils the nasty ingredients of fevered situations; and I would recommend him warmly to all who are concerned about the realities of personal experience in a muddled cause.

There is always, of course, the powerful argument which has been lost in the fury of the debate outside Spain: that the Spanish masses are primitively and fundamentally anti-European. Mr. Brereton gives hints of this throughout an interesting account of how ordinary men and women were behaving on the Government side. He has one great advantage over the majority of writers on Spain: he knew the country and the language well before the war started. He knows the people—an unfashionable trait in a world of ideologists and politicians—and if he seems to neglect the big issues, the neglect is apparent and not real. It has enabled him, hearing on all hands the deep weariness of the common people with the cruel and futile war their ruling classes thrust upon them, to catch the following gem of Spanishness. It came from a U.G.T. man of 35 and was spoken, as those who know Spain will recognise, absolutely without irony:

> "What is the use of this war? People are suffering terribly. The civil population is slaughtered by shells and bombs. I cannot see any purpose in the sort of life we are leading. I suppose it is because I am an ignorant, uneducated man. That is the trouble with us Spaniards: we know nothing, we have no culture"—*cultura* was the word he used—"If we had, perhaps we should understand the sense of it all."

There spoke the mediaeval man, the real Spaniard. *Cultura*, specifically a thing of the post-renaissance world, has not touched them. Only the Europeans, and the Spanish minorities who get a smattering of European notions, have enough of that *cultura* to smash their country up on modern mass-production lines. Mr. Brereton's book is brief, but especially in his country scenes, in village inns and farms, he has caught a war-time Spain which has more value and vividness as evidence than all the half-drunk arguments.

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The writer of *A Note in Appreciation* well says that Sheppard aimed at a peace movement of those who, like himself, were "unable to fight. Pacifists must be those for whom fighting is impossible because it is no longer in their natures." The pacifist, in other words, who is to stand the test of loneliness and infinite provocation, must have so lost fear for himself and be so full of love for his fellow-men that he cannot do anything except offer them his friendship and try to evoke theirs. There are such people, and it is only those who aim at this type of saintliness who seem to me to have the right to the title of Christian. There are plenty of other people of good will, and there are plenty of arguments for other philosophies than Christianity. But if you are, say, a champion of a method of keeping peace by the use of collective force and are willing in the last resort to drop bombs on other people, you may be justified by history and expediency, you may be more likely than the pacifist to prevent war at any particular moment, but you are not, it seems to me, a follower of Christ, even though you are an Archbishop. For really, cant aside, it is not possible to square bombs and battleships with the injunction to return good for evil, nor is it convincing to repeat the blessing on those who love their enemies if you are in point of fact preparing

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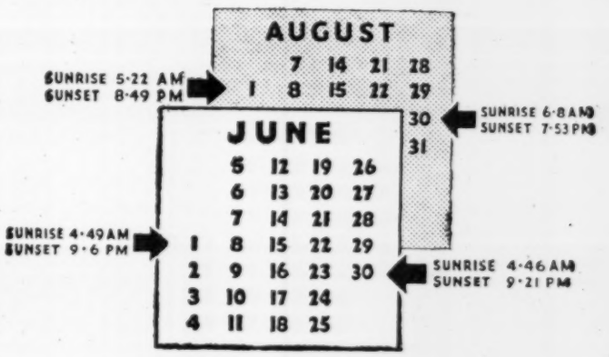

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to blow to smithereens anyone who covets your empire. I wish the Archbishops and the other ecclesiastical dignitaries would be plainer on this subject. Either they follow Christ, who was not a compromiser, or they admit that Christianity is not in its entirety a practicable philosophy, and they really ought to call themselves by some other name. The pulpit lost respect in the last war by getting muddled up with the recruiting platform and finding ingenious reasons for putting the Sermon on the Mount into cold storage. The Church may, of course, survive as an institution, but it will cease to appeal to earnest followers of Christ if it compromises much further with the fundamental tenets of its faith.

Occasionally the world throws up men who really are Christians; men, as I say, who are incapable of anything but friendship whatever reception their friendship meets. I have met half a dozen or so of such men; amongst them, conspicuously, Dick Sheppard and George Lansbury. To have known Dick Sheppard is to miss him continually, whether you agreed with him or not. The astonishing quality of friendship and good-humour he carried about with him is very difficult to convey, and I think none of the many writers in these three books of appreciation would feel that they had altogether succeeded.

In *Dick Sheppard, By His Friends*, the chapters by Arthur Wragg and Rose Macaulay come nearest to portraying the Sheppard that I knew, and there are other passages in the book, especially in the composite chapter on his career, that bring him back vividly and happily. But it is clear that there were other sides to Dick Sheppard reserved for other people, and many of his admirers would find my recollection of him surprising and, perhaps, even offensive. That is not difficult to explain. He was not a set person: his personality was strong and unchanging, but his mood, the aspect of him you saw, depended on the kind of person you were, the kind of interests and challenge that you evoked. Once you had got over what was to me an obstacle—a tendency to clerical heartiness—you found a man who, as I say, was just incapable of offering you anything but wit, understanding and infinitely generous friendship.

Those who know George Lansbury will agree that he, too, has this quality of universal Christianity. He is also, in most matters, a shrewd judge and no fool in sizing up a political opponent. But I think his shrewdness has recently been blunted by his intense hope of finding in Hitler and Mussolini a response to his personal appeal for a peaceful policy. In this account of his "embassies of peace" he writes at times with a naivety which is almost incredible to those who know how sensible a person he really is. As a remark which ought not to have been allowed to pass the proof corrector, I recommend the following: "The one thing certain in my mind after listening to President Roosevelt is this: he has a great admiration for Great Britain, but his first love is for the United States." If this really represents Mr. Lansbury's mood in these interviews one understands how anxious many of his friends felt when he undertook them. Personally, I do not share the belief that personal and unofficial peace visits are necessarily futile: it all depends on what is said in the visit. But here Mr. Lansbury is not able to tell us much. He is pledged to secrecy, with the result that we get much too much about the kindliness of his reception in Germany and Italy and Poland, and elsewhere, and not enough about the substance of the conversations to enable us to judge whether they did good.

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The Tyranny of Words by Stuart Chase
(*Methuen* 10*s.* 6*d.*)

THE EAST WIND BLOWS ON THE PHYSICISTS

Philosophy and the Physicists. By L. SUSAN STEBBING. *Methuen.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Common sense may be regarded as the petrified embodiment of the science of fifty years ago. Fifty years ago, physics was predominantly materialist and mechanist; it held that whatever is real is, or is like, a piece of matter and works after the manner of a machine. As a result, contemporary common sense asserts that only matter is real and that the mechanist law of cause and effect is ultimate and all-embracing in its operations with as unhesitating a confidence as the common sense of the Middle Ages maintained that only spirit was real, and that only final causes were ultimately effective.

Two changes in contemporary physics have transformed the situation. There is, first—I quote from Professor Stebbing—a "change in the conception of matter" and there is, secondly, "a change in the status assigned by many physicists to natural laws." On the basis of these changes two eminent scientists, a mathematical physicist, Sir Arthur Eddington, and an astronomer, Sir James Jeans, have repudiated both materialism and mechanism, and affirm that only mind is real, and that the so-called world of physics is an abstraction made by our minds from an unknown, but probably mental reality (Sir Arthur Eddington), or is a thought in the mind of a mathematically thinking deity (Sir James Jeans). As both writers add to their eminence as scientists the gift of popular exposition, their works have had a prodigious sale, with the result that the grandchildren of the contemporary layman will probably be found to reaffirm the beliefs of the Middle Ages.

The object of Professor Stebbing's book is to debunk—the vulgar verb must be excused; it exactly expresses what Professor Stebbing has done—the metaphysical structures which these two scientists have erected on the basis of recent developments in our knowledge of the physical world, and, while admitting their eminence as physicists, to expose their pretensions as philosophers. This is a piece of surgical work which badly wanted doing. Professor Stebbing has done it to perfection, the "universes" of Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington being, in the course of her analysis, so thoroughly shown up and cleaned up, that I defy anybody who has read Professor Stebbing with the attention she deserves, not to bid a final farewell to the philosophical rubbish-heap to which she so effectively consigns them.

Two main charges are brought against the philosophising physicists. First, having little or no knowledge of philosophy they insist upon philosophising, discover with a naive surprise notions that are the stock-in-trade of every philosophical text-book, proffer as novelties theories which are as familiar as the objections to them, and announce as truths speculations whose fallacies every first-year philosophical student regularly exposes in his examination paper. Thus "Jeans who believes it to be an advantage not to be trained in philosophy or to have an inclination for it if one wishes to draw a philosophical conclusion from physics" makes use of conceptions derived from Plato and from Berkeley, but appears to be ignorant of the arguments which most philosophers regard as telling conclusively against these conceptions.

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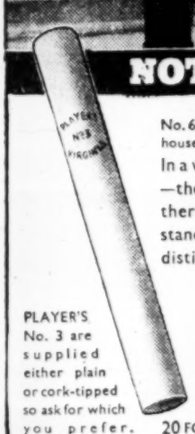

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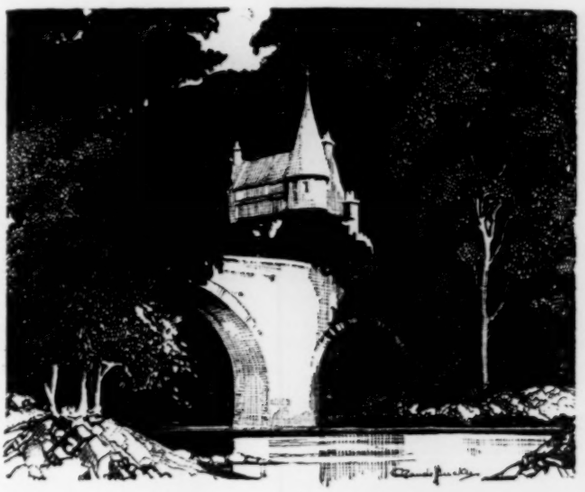

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The second main charge is that, when they begin to philosophise, these writers find support in physics "for the metaphysical theory which *on other grounds*" they find attractive, and trade upon their authority as physicists to obtain the layman's respect for theories which are the product of their wishes rather than of their knowledge. Thus they "encourage the reader to believe that he has understood a theory when he has only been entertained by an irrelevant illustration [and] persuade him to accept the philosophical theory that is put forward because it has been preceded by a good deal of difficult and abstruse physics." Professor Stebbing acidly comments: "It seems almost as though Jeans were projecting into nature the characteristics of his own and Eddington's popular writings when he said 'Heisenberg now makes it appear that nature abhors accuracy and precision above all things.'"

The book is a sustained exposure of the inconsistencies and confusions of thought of which Eddington and Jeans are guilty. For example, Eddington confuses "the world of physics" and "the physical world." The former is to be found only in physics. It is the work of the scientists and the product of abstraction, but it is founded on observation of the physical world. No conclusion reached in regard to the world of physics can, therefore, be used to show that the physical world is not fully real, or is different from what it seems to be, because, if it is not real, or is different, then conclusions based upon experiments performed upon it will be untrustworthy. Eddington, again, makes play with the notion that the mind is like an editor sitting in his sanctum, piecing together an article from the fragmentary reports that reach it over the nerves from the sense organs. From these reports the mind manufactures the outside world. But this conclusion is derived in part from a study of the machinery of sense perception in the course of which nerves and sense organs are regarded not as manufactured but as given. Again, Eddington makes philosophical use of the law of entropy. Entropy is the "heat-death" of the world, when, owing to the achievement of a maximum dispersal of energy, all change will stop. He also deduces from the same law a creator who first tied up into tidy packets ready for dispersement the energy which, as time proceeds, is being continuously dispersed. The first conclusion Eddington finds depressing and the second repugnant. But why bother, says Professor Stebbing in effect, when it turns out that the law of entropy is, for Eddington, only "a mind-spinning of the statistician."

As for Sir James Jeans—but charity forbids that I should even hint at what Professor Stebbing does to Sir James Jeans.

The general effect of these exposures is devastating. By the time that Professor Stebbing has finished with them, the philosophising scientists are left with scarcely a rag of intellectual self-respect with which to cover their philosophical nakedness. It is also on occasion extremely entertaining. Professor Stebbing's astringent comments have the quality of a very dry wine. Upon over-statement, intellectual romanticising, spiritual sentimentality and wish-fulfilment masquerading as argument, she blows like an east wind, and they shrivel at her touch. "I can claim," Sir James Jeans has written, "no special qualifications beyond the proverbially advantageous position of the mere onlooker. I am not a philosopher either by training or by inclination." "It may be true," Professor Stebbing comments, "that the onlooker sees the best of the game, although he can hardly do so unless he knows the rules observed by the players."

Professor Stebbing's general conclusion is that modern physics has and can have no contribution to make to the solution of the problems which interest philosophers and exercise theologians. Thus the physical doctrine of entropy tells us nothing about the destiny of men; the second law of thermodynamics neither confirms nor confutes Christianity; considerations derived from the study of astronomy can neither add to nor diminish the significance we attach to human life; physics provides no better arguments for idealism than it does for materialism. It is not to our ignorance of the ultimate nature of things, nor our own insignificance in the universe studied by astronomy, but "to the feebleness of our desires for good" that the present pitiable plight of human society is due. Finally, the behaviour of the electron and, in particular, the so-called uncaused electronic jumps afford no better (and no worse) reasons for believing in human free will than there were before. On human freedom Professor Stebbing commits herself to one of her rare positive pronouncements: "Human freedom consists in this: that we do not yet know what we shall be, not because the knowledge is too difficult to acquire, not because there are no certainties but only very great improbabilities, but because we are not yet finished. We are begun; what we have already become and are now becoming plays a part in what we shall become." A number of similar *obiter dicta* are scattered through the book and afford for the tender-minded reader occasional shelter from the easterly gale that blows so unremittingly through its pages.

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Bio-Politics. An Essay in the Physiology, Pathology, and Politics of the Social and Somatic Organism. By MORLEY ROBERTS. *Dent.* 15s.

Mr. Morley Roberts is one of our most distinguished story writers. Also, although without ordinary medical or biological training, he is the author of two brilliant books on pathology. I doubt if any more stimulating, more provocative, or more closely reasoned works on human morbidity and intercellular activity have been written than *Warfare in the Human Body*, published eighteen years ago, and *Malignancy and Evolution*, published eight years later. The medical profession is not prone to overestimation of the value of books on disease written by laymen; but doctors of the highest and most orthodox standing, together with the official medical journals, treated Mr. Morley Roberts' scientific books with something more than respect. He is now eighty years old; and, in the work which he has just completed, it is interesting and pleasant to find that he has retained his old artistry in the use of words, and that his keen logical sense remains at its old level of excellence.

Yet, some of his admirers will regret the publication of this latest book. We are told that it has been forty-seven years in the writing, and books thus slow in maturing are apt to be the embodiment of an idea so fixed as to amount almost to an obsession. *Bio-Politics* gives the impression of having been written in a solitary study, or in an anchorite's cell. Its basic idea is that societies, nations, and other groups of mankind are organisms, in all fundamentals similar to such organisms as the amoeba, or as man himself. It is contended that the principles of a materialistic physiology hold good of human society as they are alleged to do

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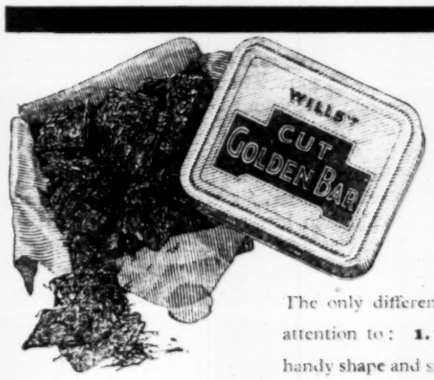

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of individual human beings. All those implacable laws of intercellular conflict and reactivity which Mr. Roberts has done so much to illumine are, he argues, equally relevant, equally determinate, in the evolutionary history of collective humanity.

The fundamental thesis of *Bio-Politics* derives from Hobbes and Herbert Spencer; but the elaborate development of biological analogy is Mr. Roberts' own. If we were allowed to treat the whole book simply as analogy, it would be as instructive and helpful as it is interesting; but the writer contends that the analogical method may amount to complete induction; and he would have us regard the term "social organism" as being literally accurate in the true biological sense. He holds that

> the tendencies we note in human society are the result of those found in any organising protoplasm. . . . All the passions of protoplasm are found in all protoplasmic construction. . . . The irritability of the minutest possible portion of protoplasm is the sole source of feeling and life in all animals.

In the organised and healthy human body, we find among the cells hereditary castes with hereditary differentiation of function. Therefore, in the healthy State, also, he argues, or would seem to argue, there must be hereditary castes and hereditary differentiation of function.

> To preserve the endocrine balance of societies is the task of the police and of statesmen, and an accepted status of classes is the best means by which it can be attained. But without hereditary castes there will be a continual resurgence of hostility. The social peace of the idealist is an unphysiological conception. Fear and dread may be more essential for peace than amiable qualities.

Sarcastically, he continues:

> As physiologists we may indulge the dream that the glands and tissues "love" each other. As pathologists and biologists we know much better.

The ordinary reader might well ask if the analogy does not at this very point break down. Surely it is no mere fancy that, unlike glands and tissues, men and women do sometimes love one another, and hate one another. But biology is evidently a hard master; for we are told that "there is nothing of which biology can take cognizance which can be called intelligence as the word is commonly understood."

Mr. Roberts' notions of liberty and of human political aims generally may be gathered from these few passages:

> It appears liberty is not a biological word. There can be no freer worker than the automatic worker. This is the somatic freedom hereditary caste cells get in the body. In this respect there can be nothing more suitable for the study of sociologists and politicians than the bone cells which lead a wonderfully active social life, continually laying down, taking away, and altering bone as they shape it to meet stress. When on fatal occasions they get undue and unnatural liberty there may be sarcoma, an explosive malignant osteomegaly, or overgrowth. Such accidents may affect the social organism itself. . . . The tender-minded philosopher may, perhaps, turn to a caste system in hope rather than fear.
>
> There can be no place for prejudice, morals, religion, or intellectually concocted schemes of idealism in this argument so long as it is kept on the purely biological level. All physiological aspects of late thought are irrelevant. . . . We have nothing to do with the finer hopes and aspirations of humanity, or with pity, indignation and rage at its sufferings.

The author concludes that "the establishment of class repugnance tends to stable social construction by forbidding that inter-class familiarity which is always likely to lead to misunderstanding."

Pacifists and Communists alike are, from Mr. Roberts' biological standpoint, phenomena of degeneracy.

> When a number of social units suffer sufficient adrenal damage to wreck their essential tribal capacity to fight, there is what may legitimately be called a social endocrine failure. It makes no difference that the theory commonly known as Pacifism is held by those who are thus degenerate to be a distinct moral advance.

For this social disorder, Mr. Roberts prescribes stern surgical treatment. Again and again he reiterates that

> the only State organisation likely to last for a long historical period, with relative satisfaction to all its units, must be a caste system. There is no biological ground for Communism when very early tribal conditions have passed.

We are told, further, that doctors are badly employed in trying to keep alive those who should die, especially the old, who are a burden to the State.

Bio-Politics has been hailed by one or two distinguished men of science as a classic work destined to take its place by the side of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*. I doubt it.

HARRY ROBERTS

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The historian has two methods of observation to choose from. He can climb into a hypothetical crow's-nest above the whole field of events, and so command a view of the large movements, the dominating tendencies and crucial actions of the day; or he can localise himself in one place, and accept the limitations of his outlook for the sake of the intimacy and the detail of whatever comes within his narrow view. Mrs. Robertson's book is of the latter kind. Her observation-post is the choir of Salisbury Cathedral. *Sarum Close* is primarily a record of the choristers' school, which has an unbroken history of seven hundred years. As the wife of a headmaster at the school, Mrs. Robertson has had opportunities of research and a first-hand experience which make her book definitive of its subject.

In its essential theme *Sarum Close* is necessarily limited in its appeal, but the general reader will find that it also serves as a focus for the miscellaneous history of a typical English community. In that sense *Sarum Close* does for the Church what Gladys Scott Thomson's *Life in a Noble Household* did for the aristocratic landowner: it re-creates the very fabric and texture of day-to-day life.

The large part the Church has played in English history is obvious enough, but there are not many recent books which reveal the pattern of Church life. *Sarum Close* can be recommended to the general reader because it does this. It recaptures the strength and the weakness of those who passed their days, generation after generation, in the masculine community of the Cathedral. Their quarrels, their wisdom, their pleasures, follies and jealousies echo in the formal records that were kept. The history of the choir is a microcosm which reflects both the larger changes of national fortune, and such constant factors as the canonical tendency to hot temper and the English genius for eccentricity.

Organists, famous and infamous, have their place in this chronicle, including one who played a dance-tune as a voluntary and thereby tempted some frivolous young ladies to ask each other to dance. John Donne comes briefly into the story in an attempt to settle what must be *the* classic storm in a teacup. Two

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candidates for the post of music-master had received equal votes, and neither side would yield. Dulcibella, mother of one of the rivals, thereupon occupied the strategic position of the Choristers' House and resisted a siege which was progressively intensified until the Archbishop of Canterbury, four bishops, Donne and the King himself were all involved. But Dulcibella was abashed by none of them. As Mrs. Robertson amusingly comments, *bella* she may have been but *dulcis* she certainly was not.

Not even the congregation is neglected, and Mrs. Robertson throws interesting light on the past ways of churchgoers. At one time the congregation had to cope with flood water a foot deep in the nave. In the nineteenth century something like a theatrical "box" was devised, with attendant charwomen to keep them clean and open the doors for each arrival. Owing to the lack of heating some ladies brought horse-rugs with them, and one lined her dress with silver paper. There was a sub-dean who used to put his false-teeth on top of his stall, and an archdeacon who fortified himself during long sermons with a parcel of sandwiches and a bottle of port. Altogether the general atmosphere is more robust than we now experience.

Mrs. Robertson's own contribution must not be overlooked. Faced with a highly specialised and seemingly dull subject, she has kept faith with her scholarly purpose and yet managed at the same time to produce a very readable and entertaining narrative. Her judgment is temperate and kindly, and her occasional interpolations of a dry humour are always apposite and pointed. If anyone is tempted to describe the saints and sinners of *Sarum Close* as a microcosm there will be more excuse than there usually is.

DESMOND HAWKINS

SHORTER NOTICES

From Lenin to Stalin. By VICTOR SERGE. *Secker and Warburg.* 3s. 6d.

Victor Serge is a "Trotskyite" who has suffered prison and exile for his opinions. Perhaps naturally his book is not so much (as the dust-jacket claims) a "critical history" as a piece of recrimination against the Stalinist régime. The book passes very sketchily through the history of the Revolution, the creation of the Third International, Nep, and collectivisation. On the issue of collectivisation came Trotsky's downfall and Stalin's victory; and along with other Trotskyists, Victor Serge was expelled from the Party and imprisoned. (It was not till 1936 that he was finally banished.) After 1928, the date of his expulsion, his book makes little pretence at history and lapses into that witless, heavy sarcasm which so overloads Soviet newspapers and political literature. Instead of a serious and reasoned criticism of Stalin—and what could be more interesting than some intimate study of Stalin?—Serge gives us fripperies of this sort: "Traitor, gravedigger, fratricide, Thermidorian, destroyer of the party: he is covered with disgrace. He is afraid. But one thing in him is even stronger than fear; and that is rancour." All this obscures the genuine case which Victor Serge has against the present Soviet regime, particularly against the "bureaucratic degeneration of the party." In fact, the Soviet press and the Party themselves are more or less chronically engaged in campaigning against bureaucracy; so much so that "bureaucrat" is rapidly becoming a most telling term of abuse for making a person shake in his shoes. It is a pity that Victor Serge turns all this into the subject of a political wrangle.

Dark Paths. By GEOFFREY PINNOCK. *Nicholson and Watson.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. Pinnock is to be congratulated. He has written a thoroughly entertaining and absorbing book about modern smuggling—smuggling, that is, since the war. The curious "dry laws" that exist in many of the Baltic countries, the strange stories of the Carpathians and the secret movements that exist behind the bland façade of Central European police States give the author excellent scope to display his wide knowledge of the private routes and the organised gangs that carry contraband goods, arms, propaganda and people over the frontiers. One very interesting section deals with English smuggling. Many of the cases will be familiar in outline to newspaper readers, but Mr. Pinnock has filled in the outlines and has a lot to tell us about what has been happening behind the scenes. There is one unfortunate gap. He has very little to say about the illicit traffic in dangerous drugs. Although this is a racket that is little publicised it is as highly organised as the liquor-ring in Capone-controlled Chicago. If the man in the street were to learn of the power and prestige possessed by one of the syndicates he would be struck dumb in amazement. That is if he believed his ears. Apart from this omission, *Dark Paths* is to be thoroughly recommended to all who like to read books of adventure, desperate courage, and the resource of the law.

Phillip of Australia. By M. BARNARD ELDERSHAW. *Harrap.* 15s.

Sometimes there are advantages in the novelist turned historian. None of the drama of the founding of Sydney is lost to the Barnard Eldershaw partnership, and they seek to heighten the effect by an unnecessary quarrel with the eighteenth century; its philanthropy was lip-service to humanity; it was indolent, interesting, and prosperous; egotistic; and sure of the value of civilisation. Or much like any other century perhaps, save that in the eighty-eighth year of its course Captain Phillip sailed for Botany Bay, to found the first permanent settlement in Australia. Behind the venture lay a mixture of motives: the idealism, not unflavoured by hopes of commercial success, of Matra, Young and Banks; distrust of the French, and the impossibility of continuing to transport convicts to America. Finally there was Captain Phillip himself, born of a German father; a man then of no known merit, yet one who impressed his own personality on the enterprise from the moment it was given into his hands, who evidently dreamed of the "foundations of Empire" (his own phrase) when Lord Sydney was concerned only with "effectually disposing of convicts"—they were overflowing from the gaols to hulks in the Thames. Phillip is portrayed as the embodiment of reasonableness; and perseverance. Both were needed. "Ithaca itself was scarcely more longed for by Ulysses than Botany Bay by the adventurers who had traversed so many thousands of miles to take possession of it," wrote one of the officers. Bitter experience however revealed a "land that resisted them inch by inch . . . not unfruitful, but with the secret of its fertility locked away . . . a world differently orientated from anything they know or imagined." For the years of Phillip's governorship the cycle was unvarying: harvest at the beginning of the year; then increasing want accompanied by despair and crime; a struggle against weakness to get the crops sown in June; and the artificial stimulus of supplies from overseas in the second half of the year. The tale, told skilfully and as far as possible through the journals of those who were there, shows how little the environment and difficulties affected the convicts, or their masters. However serious the outlook, no spirit of loyalty seems to have dominated the thieving instincts of the one or the petty quarrels of the other. Phillip towers over them all, till in 1792 illness forced him to abandon his post, and he passes abruptly from the scene.

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compared most unfavourably with the modern saloon. Its impromptu enclosure against bad weather was the merest make-shift. A draughty gap usually existed between the top of the windscreen and the tilt of the cape cart hood; and the removable side windows were made of celluloid—they were tiresome to install, noisy in action, and were almost as opaque as they were transparent, when their first newness had disappeared. But the open car at least conferred a gorgeous range of vision on its driver whenever he specially needed first-class all-round visibility. His windscreen was mounted in a slim frame, probably with no top framing whatsoever; and the side frames were very narrow. He could lower the windscreen flat on the scuttle in fog, or tilt it at such an angle that he could look over the top of it, whilst the forward extension of the hood prevented rain from penetrating such gaps. To right and left his vision was absolutely unobscured, provided he refrained from erecting the two front side panels of celluloid. He could see far better than any modern driver can see, whenever he drove in fog, or in rain, or in such cold air that the passengers' breath automatically condensed on the inner surfaces of any glazing.

To-day I may pay £3,000 for a super car in the assurance that when conditions are bad, my vision from inside the car will always be poor. I shall not be able to open the front screen sufficiently to see under or over it. It will fog internally whenever the air is cold, and the warmth of four or five passengers mists the inner glass with human breath. The side pillars of the screen will vary in thickness with the coachbuilder concerned, but in any case will blanket two patches of road on which erratic pedestrians or cyclists may lurk, and on which important signs may be located. The side windows to my right and left will mist, become dappled with rain or snow, and will utterly fail to facilitate accurate results from that swift sideway cock of the tail of my eye which is the most that lateral vision can achieve in heavy modern traffic. There will be twin wipers on my front screen (since the imaginary car is a top-price vehicle); but these wipers will on 999 cars out of 1,000 be fundamentally defective. If driven by suction or electricity, they will down tools against heavy snow; if driven by suction they will vary their speed without reference to the severity of the occasion; and when damaged by frequent bendings accidentally sustained in cleansing the front glass by hand, they will not easily be induced to bed down firmly on the glass for the whole area of their presumed sector. A power-driven twin wiper of much heavier construction is obviously desirable (and is already fitted on at least one quite inexpensive car); and it should have a clutch, so that it can be released from its drive and so protected against damage when the glass is being hand-polished.

Recent inventions have made it possible for a synthetic curved glass screen to surround the whole front of the driving cockpit in one unbroken transparent piece. The general adoption of such a mode of construction is plainly desirable. It creates fresh problems for the coachbuilder, such as those of entry and exit when the fore edge of the front door is set farther astern, and the necessity of hinging both doors on a central side pillar, with the risk of the front door swinging open if left unlatched, instead of swinging shut, as it does when the hinges are on its fore edge. (This latter trouble is not serious—many cars are habitually reversed out of garage, the moment when unlatched doors are most liable to damage.) There is no mechanical impossibility about fitting a full-depth and full-width wiper to such a curved screen, or about driving such wipers off the engine.

Two other aspects of vision are far less easily solved. They relate to internal misting of glazed surfaces, and to the familiar dazzle problem. No adequate research seems to have been performed with regard to internal misting. A few designers have toyed with ventilation as a solution, and others have played with defroster panels, inserted in the glass and electrically heated. Others again have directed currents of hot air on to the screen, and a few have arranged water sprays to assist in keeping a screen organically clean under conditions where dirt (dust off untarred roads) complicates the vision problem. Anybody who has inspected the cars which arrive at Monte Carlo in the famous annual Rally is aware that these intrepid winter tourists dare not rely on standard practice. An immense improvement results if the rear edge of the engine bonnet is propped open a mere half-inch, so that hot fumes are carried backwards to take the chill off the glass of the front screen. Prompt and resolute research work is urgent in all these directions. If a solution is found, initial cost may limit its application to the more expensive cars, but the public demand would be such that manufacturers would soon solve the financial aspects.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the dazzle problem has ceased to relate to the car itself, and has been transferred during recent years to street lighting. There is no longer any reason why one car should dazzle the driver of another car under normal conditions. Nor is there any reason why a driver, using lamps in the non-dazzle position, should not enjoy as much illumination as is requisite for safety. A 1938 car of good make furnishes its happy owner with ample illumination for speeds up to 40 m.p.h., except when he is on a sharp bend. The real dazzle nuisance of to-day is created by public lighting of streets, often by the lamps installed by the local authority to protect the public, and even more often by the brilliant and confusing lights installed by tradesmen of various types to advertise their premises and attract customers. The big electrical firms are concentrating on research, and can now solve the street lamp problem with a very tolerable efficiency, though the cost of transforming a large area is necessarily high. In another ten years we shall be wondering how we ever tolerated the abominable distractions of fixed public lamps in the streets of 1938. A little energy and a large expenditure would eliminate most of the surviving perils of night driving. Over known roads most motorists even now feel safer by night than by day; and the contrast would be delightful if obsolete street lamps were eliminated, and control of shop and cinema lighting instituted.

There remains but one road vision problem which at the moment must be deemed insoluble—that of fog. The only promising expedient yet promulgated is that of painting a white line down the centre of every important road, edging every important road with a whitewashed kerb, and embedding green reflector mirrors in the kerb at road junctions. Should a war break out, the inevitable black-outs will force us to adopt these devices in a great hurry for other reasons.

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RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, May 6th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

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MIEDERS-STUBAITAL-TIROL, by bus ½ hour from Innsbruck. 3,000 above sea-level. Ideally situated for winter sports. Pension terms Engl. sh. 7s. daily. For particulars apply HERR BECK, Gasthof Kreuter

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NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 423

Set by T. W. Earp

Walter Pater or Henry James writes from the Elysian Fields to thank a novelist of the Tough-Guy-Blood-and-Guts School for a presentation copy of one of his works. The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) will be awarded for the two best letters of not more than 250 words.

Report by T. W. Earp

A gratifying number of competitors diverted their attention from the colourless Easter to the purple passage, though James was a more popular model than Pater. It is interesting to note that both the shades were more generally assumed to adopt an attitude of defence rather than condemnation. Sympathy was implicit beneath the veil of parody. Often, too, that medium was used in its higher form, as an instrument of criticism instead of mere pastiche. Thus "Towanbucket" gets to the heart of the Jamesian problem with "I look on writing as an intensive and meticulous pursuit of exact truth, whose subtle manifestations cannot, to put it plainly, be 'pinned down' without much arduous refinement of phrase." He finds a parallel in R. S. Jaffray, whose able but perhaps too extenuate entry makes James speak of a style which "seeks to express the writer's meaning without any remote possibility of misconception and to leave the gracious reader with no excuse whatever for being unaware of the exact nature, circumstances, antecedents, purposes or lack of them which animate the actions and reactions of the various personages." G. T. Lewis points out that the Fictions, the Prefaces and the Letters are three different styles; and J. B. Eyre, with the valedictory "Yours, in the fraternity of the pen," clinches his reminder of the fine, sympathetic interest in work opposed to his own, which distinguished James. It is evident that the combustion, though laborious, of the grand old engineer's latter-day Rye-House Plot, still has its repercussions. In the case of Pater, W. Bliss began well with "I have to thank you for the gift of your book which has reached me here in these quiet shades that remind me so much of the Oxford of my days." And that the modern novel of violence should lead Pater to detect a flaw of savagery in Marcus Aurelius is an ingenious idea. But W. P.'s entry (name and address, please) with its display of a single-minded point of view merging into deliberate incomprehension in order to remain intact, has a wider range of characterisation, and is awarded the first prize, as Miss R. Maxwell's Jamesian alembication receives the second.

FIRST PRIZE

From WALTER PATER,
aux bons soins,
Arretos Kore.

SIR,

I have to thank you for the gift of a copy of your "Gangsters' Gong" which I have read with profound interest.

I am astonished to find that what I wrote as an aesthetic critic more than sixty years ago should have had so wide an influence in so short a time. The leit motif of your story is one which I have held to be implicit in all works of art, *ex forti dulcedo*, and even if it was a little difficult for me at first to disengage the "virtue" of the "molls" who added a spiritual embroidery to the pattern of the sub-machine gun, I succeeded in the end in discovering that your story is a prodigious attempt to convert the doings of the underworld into music.

The crack of the machine gun, the deeper note of the automatic, the soprano cries of the women, the bass curses of the men—all this, I feel sure, is a notable step towards a musical intimité. A noisy realism is transformed into a silvery mysticism, which in its turn will become a graceful mystery that satisfies the soul. *De profundis clamavi.* The cry of the underworld, that perpetual accompaniment of life in the raw, is transmuted by your subtle alchemy into a diapason of cosmic significance.

Yours faithfully,
W. P.

SECOND PRIZE

Let me thank you, in the measure in which I difficultly *can*, for the volume you so generously and touchingly sent me, in search of the words to characterise which my pen has since been ineptly and *almost* despairingly about to dip. But I can't, now, hideously further postpone my appreciation. Your work is of a type in which my library has until now been I find it impossible here to describe *how* regrettably deficient. I await impatiently your *mouvement ascensionnel*, on the culmination of which you will, I trust, enlightenedly and enlighteningly further instruct me in the evidently so enormously increased *impacts*, if I may so express it, in the world of to-day, by which I mean outward and violent expressions of one's inward compulsions. I promise myself, here, the interest of introducing you to Edmund Spenser, to some episodes in whose works your own does, in so markedly different a milieu, style and *tutti quanti*, yet authentically bear a resemblance. In his Saracens, as in your how felicitously named "toughs," the pugnacious instinct does, intensely and unfailingly, take the place of intellectual processes. In my out-of-touchness with your world, I nevertheless venture to suggest that some modifications of style, reconstruction of plot, in order *more* fully to draw out the subtleties of characterisation, *might* make clearer the informative idea, principle, theory, which does tantalisingly a little escape me. The hero's nature hasn't—has it?—*quite* the beauty one does yearningly envisage for him.

Yours all overwhelmedly,
HENRY JAMES

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 278.—GRINDGEAR'S REGISTRATION NUMBER

[*Being another exercise in the construction of a numerical problem in which no actual number is mentioned.*]

When Professor Grindgear went to the police station to report the loss of his new car he could not remember its number.

"Four figures, Inspector," he said. "I know that. But I can't remember a single one of them."

"Four figures, eh?" said Sergeant Smallbeer. "Well, sir, that's something. But we'd have liked a more definite clue, if you could give us one."

Grindgear's blue eyes assumed a glazed expression. "Wait," he said. "Something begins to come back to me. The other day, apropos my car number, I was discussing factors with my granddaughter."

"Factors, eh?" said Smallbeer, moistening his pencil.

"Yes," said the Professor. "My car number has quite a lot of factors. And I was mentioning to Cyclamen (my granddaughter—a silly name, isn't it?)—I was mentioning to her that three of these factors, adding up to 100, could be selected in quite a lot of ways. See what I mean? Suppose my car number is *n*——"

"*n*," said the bewildered Smallbeer, dutifully making a note.

"—suppose my car number is *n*, then if *ax*, *by* and *cz* are each equal to *n*, *a*, *b* and *c* can be selected in such a way that $a + b + c = 100$; and in fact a number of such selections (in the case of my car) can be made."

Smallbeer put down his notebook. "P'raps you'll write it down afterwards?" he suggested.

"No need," said Grindgear. "I'm merely thinking aloud . . ."

"Now," he resumed, "—don't interrupt me again—we were considering, Cyclamen and I, the case where, given that $a + b + c = 100$, $x + y + z$ is a minimum. . . . Yes, I remember it now. . . . In that case, we discovered, $x + y + z$ is equal to the product of four numbers, all primes; and the sum of those four numbers—this is what we thought rather interesting—is one more than *a*, and one less than *b*. And that fact, I'm pretty sure, affords a unique clue to the number of my car."

"And what did you say it was, sir?" asked Smallbeer, who had been making out a football coupon during the latter part of the Professor's discourse.

"Pooh!" was the disconcerting answer. "Work it out for yourself, Smallbeer. I've given you all the data."

What is the Professor's car number?

PROBLEM 276.—GOOD EGGS

Solution by L. Bihaly

Humpty-Dumpty's mark in arithmetic was 10.

There were altogether seven good eggs who qualified, because the number of marks necessary to qualify was $4 \times 3 \times$ the number of subjects and at the same time twice as many as the number of good eggs besides Humpty-Dumpty who qualified, multiplied by the number of subjects.

There must have been at least five subjects because the total number of marks necessary to qualify was four times the maximum obtainable in one subject and no marks were repeated in any one score.

In case of five subjects there are exactly seven ways to score:—

$60 = 15 + 14 + 13 + 12 + 6$
$60 = 15 + 14 + 13 + 11 + 7$
$60 = 15 + 14 + 13 + 10 + 8$
$60 = 15 + 14 + 12 + 11 + 8$
$60 = 15 + 14 + 12 + 10 + 9$
$60 = 15 + 13 + 12 + 11 + 9$
$60 = 14 + 13 + 12 + 11 + 10$

In case of more than five subjects there are many more than seven ways to score. Humpty-Dumpty's mark at arithmetic, therefore, was 10.

PROBLEM 275.—A MESSAGE IN CODE

A set of Low's cartoons goes to: L. F. Masters, 107 Handside Lane, Welwyn Garden City.

Seven points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope, but on separate sheets of paper.

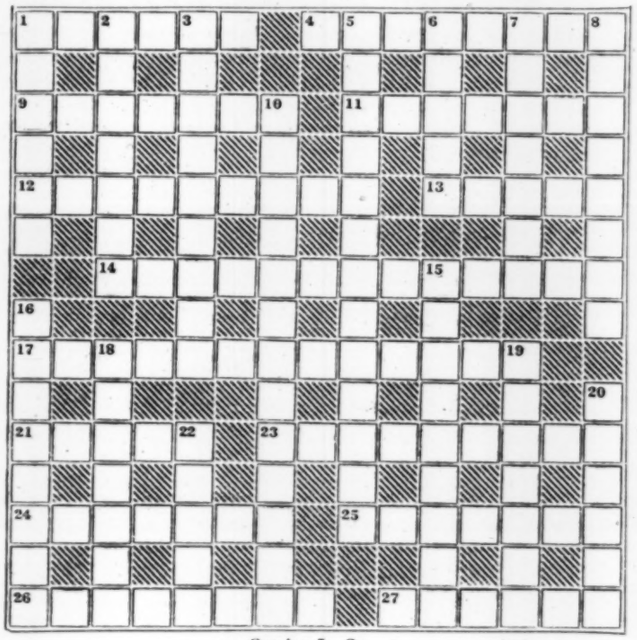
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 425

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Miss N. Margt. James, 16 Lônydail, Rhiwbina, Cardiff

ACROSS

1. Manuscript on betting device. (6)
4. Flower that calls the leading lady? (8)
9. Would a steak be a substitute for this? (7)
11. Calves' food is dispensed from it. (7)
12. A grammarian might argue that this meant "namely." (9)
13. Where everyone goes after a saint. (5)
14. They make things go smoothly about the house. (13)
17. Do they get a small commission? (13)
21. Fifty-ones for tying up. (5)
23. Not even, yet not odd. (9)
24. Not such a ruddy doctor. (7)
25. One tile suffices for it. (7)
26. In the City of London this would presumably be Aldgate. (8)
27. Dispatched again. (6)

DOWN

1. Shin-dy? (6)
2. A neat tug made of metal. (7)
3. One requires a happy knack to produce like this. (9)
5. He sounds like an acrobatic glass bird. (13)
6. The dictator does it without any. (5)
7. Sea clue for a stone. (7)
8. The sort of relative that causes the B.B.C. to broadcast an S.O.S. (8)
10. Is this located in the funny bone? (13)
15. Sole value of sugar. (9)
16. The Order of Jesting Bedmakers? (8)
18. Cause irritable laughter no doubt. (7)
19. Underneath? (7)
20. Pick of the tipsters. (6)
22. The horse that turns in. (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

■	E	G	G	F	L	I	P	S	■	T	S	A	E	B
■	■	R	■	I	■	A	■	C	■	H	■	L	■	O
O	N	E	O	V	E	R	T	H	E	E	I	G	H	T
L	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	O	■	S	■	O	■	T
D	A	T	E	S	■	S	T	O	N	E	W	A	L	L
C	■	S	■	■	■	■	L	■	A	■	■	■	■	E
L	I	C	I	T	■	C	H	I	N	S	T	R	A	P
O	■	O	■	H	■	H	■	N	■	O	■	I	■	A
T	I	T	T	E	R	I	N	G	■	N	A	D	I	R
H	■	■	■	S	■	N	■	■	■	■	■	G	■	T
E	X	T	R	I	C	A	T	E	■	L	A	E	D	I
S	■	E	■	G	■	T	■	O	■	U	■	W	■	E
M	O	N	T	H	■	O	F	S	U	N	D	A	Y	S
A	■	T	■	T	■	W	■	I	■	G	■	Y	■	■
N	O	S	E	S	■	N	O	N	S	E	N	S	E	■

The demand for CAPSTAN increases daily – say W.D. & H.O.WILLS

"Aye, aye, me hearties!"

WILLS'S
CAPSTAN CIGARETTES
10 FOR 6D. 20 FOR 11½D.

C.C.603K

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

MARKETS AND THE BUDGET—AMERICAN TAX REVISION—WHITEHALL AND THE FRANC

It must not be assumed that the City rejoiced over Sir John Simon's budget because prices on the Stock Exchange were firm and in some cases strong. The technical position is that dealers are still short of stock. They lowered quotations at the opening of business on Wednesday, but when they found that nobody wished to sell shares at the lower levels but that some investors wished to buy, they quickly marked prices up. Take the case of oil shares. When the news that another penny was added to the already excessive tax on petrol—at 9*d*. a gallon the tax is nearly three times the c.i.f. value of the imported product—oil shares were banged in the "Street" on Tuesday night, the leaders falling by about 5*s*. On Wednesday morning speculative buyers came into the market willing to take a gamble on a bonus for Burmah Oil and a bumper dividend for Anglo-Iranian next month. Immediately oil share prices recovered the 5*s*. they had lost in the Street the previous night. Whether this rise will survive a halfpenny cut in the price of petrol, which I personally foresee, I do not know. The petrol companies have marked up their selling prices by the extra tax to 1*s*. 7½*d*. per gallon, but in view of the fall in American export prices for gasoline and lower tanker freight rates, I should normally have expected by now a reduction in the British selling price of petrol. Incidentally, the budget contains a nasty blow for Petroleum Storage and Finance, the petrol company which markets "Cleveland" petrol and Discol petrol-alcohol. My impression is that this tax will destroy the profitability of selling power-alcohol mixtures, unless the new tax burden is passed on to the consumer. Oil shares apart, I can see no logic in buying equity shares generally on a budget which is financially sound but economically deflationary. Business in this country has passed its peak and has declined appreciably this year, in spite of the enormous rearmament expenditures. An increase in direct taxation has the psychological effect of making the business-man more cautious, and I have no doubt that the extra income tax will accelerate the under-investment of the national savings or, in other words, will accelerate the trade decline.

* * *

As regards the gilt-edged market, there is theoretically no reason why prices should be affected by a rise in the standard rate of income tax, but psychologically the private holder of gilt-edged stocks cannot fail to be upset. Jobbers, therefore, lowered the quotations for British funds on Wednesday morning, although some optimists declared that a budget so financially sound should have improved the price of British credit. The jobbers were probably right in expecting some private selling. The net yield (after tax) is hardly attractive to the private investor, as the following table indicates:

	Price	Yields % Flat Gross	Net Redemption*
3½% War Loan (1952 or after) ..	101xd.	£3 9 0	£2 8 9
3% Locals	87⅜	3 8 9	2 10 0
2½% Consols	74⅜	3 7 3	2 8 9
4% Consols (1957 or after) ..	110⅝	3 12 9	2 5 0
3% Conversion (1948-53)	101⅛	2 19 3	2 0 6
2½% National Defence (1944-48) ..	99¾	2 10 3	1 17 6

* After tax at 5*s*. 6*d*.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that ultimately, through private selling, the gilt-edged market will fall to the level at which the insurance companies will be able to buy and make a living, which I put at 3¾ per cent. to 3⅞ per cent.

* * *

After its one-day rally to 121, when President Roosevelt's "pump-priming" programme was presented to Wall Street in Easter-egg fashion, the Dow Jones index of American industrials has reacted to about 115. New York's financial district has made up its mind that the reactions of industry to increased Federal expenditure on relief will be slow, and that, unless and until business confidence is restored, the vast pool of potential credit which the Treasury is creating will be little used. Greater interest has been shown by the market in tax developments. The Lower House, not without indications of Presidential intervention, refused to accept the Senate's rejection of the undistributed profits tax; but a compromise has been reached which Congress seems likely to accept and which Mr. Roosevelt can hardly veto. The new plan provides that corporations will in future pay a tax of 16½ per cent. on earnings, plus a sur-tax running up to 2½ per cent. on sums not distributed in dividends. Furthermore, capital gains on assets will hereafter be taxed at a flat rate of 15 per cent. if held for over two years, 18 per cent. if held for over 18 months. Only gains on securities sold after being held for under 18 months will be assessed as income. Wall Street had grudgingly to admit that these modifications represented concessions of substance to large investors, but there was disappointment that the principal of the two controversial taxes would still survive. Depression has been deepened by a batch of poor first-quarter earnings statements, further declines in almost every economic index and reports that the President will ask Congress to approve fresh "trust-busting."

* * *

Having fallen by the end of last week to 167, the French franc made a somewhat spectacular recovery on Monday to 160 as a result of sudden purchases by the "control." The rally was assisted by M. Daladier's policy declaration to the press after Monday's Council of Ministers. This was well received by the Bourse—in particular the Premier's insistence that there would be no control of the exchanges, no penal taxation of capital, but that production must be increased by abandoning the 40-hour week, giving industrialists greater credit facilities, and speeding up schemes of public works. The Bourse assumed, perhaps short-sightedly, that the C.G.T. would offer no effective opposition to this policy of making France safe for profiteers and speculators, and equity shares in Paris rose briskly. The main factor, however, behind the control's intervention in the exchange market appears to have been a stiff request from the British Government to stop "unfair" depreciation of the franc. As a signatory to the Tripartite Agreement, France had no option but to agree. Whether 160 is a safe figure for the franc is, nevertheless, highly questionable. So long as the franc is vulnerable, it will remain a medium through which the "two hundred families" can blackmail every Government—and M. Daladier's is complaisant enough—into reaction. To have revalorised at 200, as M. Reynaud is believed to have urged, might have been a wiser step, and would have given the Government time to get its recovery plans going. Unless, of course, the agreed price for expensively keeping the franc at 160 is a substantial sterling loan from London—or a military alliance.

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